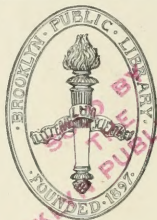




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IN SICILY

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THE TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX AT GIRGENTI

Photo by Crupi.



IN SICILY

1896-1898-1900

BY

DOUGLAS SLADEN

AUTHOR OF

"THE JAP'S AT HOME," "ON THE CARS AND OFF," "A JAPANESE MARRIAGE,"
"THE ADMIRAL," AND "MY SON RICHARD"

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
THE WHITAKERS OF SICILY
OUR KIND HOSTS
TO WHOM
I OWE MOST OF THE ORIGINAL INFORMATION
CONTAINED IN IT

53A32

"This is that Sicily. . . . I saw the most interesting (profane) country after Egypt; and its history—beginning with the highest antiquity—unites in due time both with the Greek history and the Roman. It was the theme of almost every poet and every historian, and the remains in it of the past are of an earlier antiquity and more perfect than those of other countries."

JOHN HENRY (Cardinal) NEWMAN (1833).

PREFACE

“THIS is that Sicily,” wrote John Henry Newman to his sister Harriet on the 16th of February, 1833. “Little as I have seen of Sicily it has filled me with inexpressible delight, and (in spite of dirt and other inconveniences) I am drawn to it as by a loadstone.”

What that great romantic soul felt has been the feeling of nearly every scholar and artist who has set foot in Trinacria, the three-caped island which is Europe's central bridge to Africa. Nor is the reason far to seek ; in Sicily you have superb classical remains in the midst of a population busily living the life described in the masterpieces of literature which have come down to us from Greek and Roman times. These places are easy to get at, and have good hotel accommodation. At Athens you are shocked by the intrusion of modern German and French civilisation. At Syracuse the poorer inhabitants wear different clothes, but, in other respects, are unaltered from the day of Dionysius. IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND ANCIENT GREECE, GO TO SICILY, which has the remains of twenty or thirty more or less perfect Greek temples, some almost complete. Of works of Roman inception the island possesses few, except the great amphitheatre at Syracuse ; but there are Romanized Greek monuments, such as the famous theatre at Taormina, and Romanized Phœnician remains like the ruins of Solunto, the Sicilian Pompeii. But the classical remains of Sicily are essentially Greek, and they are of inestimable value, because, unlike so many of the

IN SICILY

classical remains in Italy, they have not been obliterated by later civilisations and conquests. The Greek capitals of Sicily, when they were destroyed, never lifted up their heads again. Syracuse was not destroyed except by the depredations of Verres; the Romans, when they captured it, made it their own provincial capital, and it was never captured by the Carthaginians. Girgenti and Selinunte, the principal rivals of Syracuse, were demolished almost simultaneously by Hannibal, the son of Gisco, and their ruins for the most part are as he left them, more than four centuries before Christ. Selinunte has no modern city; and the modern city of Girgenti, though it embraces one ancient temple, is not on the site of the Greek city, but on the hill above it. Selinunte, with the neighbouring temple and theatre of Segesta, Girgenti, and Syracuse, are, for Greek remains, the most interesting places in Sicily. Palermo never was a Greek city. If it had been, the traces might have been obliterated like those of Messina, trampled out of existence by the feet of many conquerors, or Catania, overwhelmed by Etna.

The reader must not run away with the idea that the only interesting ruins in Sicily are Greek. Sicily has a beautiful style of architecture peculiar to itself, the Arabo-Norman, or Sicilian-Gothic, the gems of which are the Royal Chapel at Palermo, and the cathedral of Monreale, famous for their mosaics. It also has, in the Royal Palace, a mosaic-lined, Arabo-Norman dwelling-room of the twelfth century quite perfect, and, in the Palace of the Inquisition, the rival of the Bayeux tapestry—the Saracenic roof which Manfred Chiamonte, in the fourteenth century, had painted with all the life of his time.

The principal places treated in this book are Taormina, Syracuse, Castrogiovanni, Girgenti, Palermo, Monreale, Bagheria, Solunto, Cefalu, Marsala, Trapani, Monte S. Giuliano (Eryx), Castelvetro, Selinunte, and Segesta. Other places, like Messina and Catania, are treated more briefly.

This is not a guide-book to enable the traveller to dispense with

PREFACE

Baedeker; it is a travel book to make him desire to visit Sicily. It contains, however, the requisite information about the places treated to tell the tourist how to get to them, and the cost of living and locomotion. But it deals especially with the romance of Sicily—its romantic and semi-African scenery; its romantic architecture, Pelasgic of the Mycenaean age, Greek, Roman, Saracenic, Byzantine, Norman, and Spanish-Renaissance.

It also contains a splendid map of Sicily prepared by Messrs. Baedeker and Co., publishers of the guide-books, and a list of the Sicilian kings and principal dates in Sicilian history. Special attention is paid to the wild flowers, for which, in early spring, Sicily excels any part of Europe. Sicily is rich, too, in an unspoiled peasantry, who still wear a distinctive native dress and use two-wheeled carts inherited from generation to generation, painted with scenes from their history, and drawn by gaily caparisoned asses. These are thrown into relief by the vast and decaying palaces of the nobility, enriched with all manner of Renaissance and Baroque extravagances.

English people do not realise that half the history of Greece belongs to the Sicilian Greeks, that Syracuse was a larger city than ever Athens was, and that Syracuse was once the greatest city in the world, as Palermo was under its Norman kings.

The life of the Sicilian Greeks is especially interesting to us, because good women play a large part in their history, while hardly any women appear in other Greek history, except women like Aspasia and Sappho.

A special feature in the book is the amount of information it gives about curio-buying. Sicily is a paradise to the collector of out-of-the-way curios. Putting aside the old Sicilian lace, the cabinets and crucifix-crosses veneered with tortoise-shell, old enamels, old rococo jewellery, the old armorial tiles used to mark the ownership of houses, and the cheap but wonderfully elegant pottery of old Greek shapes used everywhere by the peasantry, there are the famous coloured wood-

IN SICILY

carvings, the Sicilian majolicas, and, above all, Greek bronzes, coins, and terra-cottas. To my mind the Sicilian terra-cotta figures are not as beautiful or rich in human feeling as the famous Tanagra figures, but they are higher art, much more ancient, and, what is of even greater importance, they are still to be bought at moderate prices. One submits any antique of value to the Director of one of the national museums, before purchasing it, to know if he will give the necessary *permesso* to allow it to be exported. If it is a forgery he will say so.

Sicily is semi-African in its scenery, owing to the vast quantities of prickly-pears and agaves found growing everywhere, and the magnificent palms, yuccas, aloes, and bamboos in the gardens of its cities. It likewise abounds in lemon groves, orange groves, gardens of olives, and almond orchards.

Seen from the Marina, the Bay of Palermo is even more beautiful than the Bay of Naples. The papyrus-fringed banks of the Anapo and the latomias of Syracuse—sunken gardens in prehistoric quarries—have no parallel. And Taormina, with its Greco-Roman theatre at the foot of Etna and commanding the whole Strait of Messina, is perhaps the finest piece of scenery in the world.

I must not omit a word or two of comment upon the Sicilian language, which is so distinct from ordinary Italian that Italians themselves cannot understand it without long residence in Sicily. This is due partly to the Sicilian habit of clipping words, partly to the extraordinary intermixture of words from the languages of all their conquerors. Even the English occupation left its mark. One amusing instance differs from most of the others in being a translation, not a corruption. I refer to *coniglio all'argentiére*, of which Mr. Joshua Whitaker gives the following explanation: "*Coniglio all'argentiére* clearly dates from 1812 to 1814, the period of the English occupation, when no doubt Welsh rarebit was introduced by the English officers, who would not unnaturally translate rarebit into *coniglio*—rabbit. The *all'argentiére* probably was the outcome of the

PREFACE

attempts of the officers to explain that Welsh rarebit should be served on a silver dish."

The most ordinary words of Saracenic origin collected by Mr. Whitaker are *cassaro*, *gibel*, and *cala*. *Cassaro* is applied to a castle or a palace, and in West Sicily to the chief street of a town—the Corso of Palermo was formerly called the Cassaro. It is derived from *casr* (*cassar*), which we get in Castrogiovanni (*casr hanh*); *gibel*, the Saracenic *jebel*, a mountain, occurs in Gibilmanna (mountain of manna-ash); *cala* in Calatafimi, etc. (*Cal'at enfimi*). These three words are constantly occurring in compounds. To them must be added *gebbia*, used all over Sicily for the large, square, cemented cisterns erected for irrigation purposes; *senia*, the Jacob's-ladder capstan used in working them; *fundaco* (Saracenic *fundak*), a common inn, used under the form *fondaco* at Venice (*Fondaco dei Turchi*), Spanish *fonda*; *trubberi*, tablecloth, common in the province of Trapani, but not used elsewhere; *rais* (Saracen *ras*, as in the Abyssinian *Ras-alula*), the head of a crew or gang of men in any way connected with the sea; *zagara*, the flower of the orange, the lemon, or the olive; *sciara*, moorland (Saracenic *sciaara*).

Mr. Whitaker has also prepared interesting little tables of the words which the Sicilians derive from the Spanish or French without having any Italian equivalent. The words of Greek origin are mostly proper names, as Palermo, derived from the Greek *panormus*, the all harbour (Saracenic *Balarmuh*; Sicilian *Palermu*); Messina, Catania, Nicosia, and so on. Etna, the Latin *Ætna* and Greek *Aitho*, is generally known to Sicilians as Mongibello, derived from the Latin *mons* and the Saracenic *jebel*. This might be translated mountain of mountains. More interesting are survivals like *animulu*, wind, from the Greek *animos*; *macari Diu*, thanks to God; and *latomia*, quarry, which has been in unintermitted use since 480 B.C.

The intending traveller will look for a few words of advice on the subject of books. There is so much about Sicily in the Classics, especially in Thucydides, Cicero, and Livy. They all write mostly

IN SICILY

about Syracuse, though Cicero, who, having been Quæstor of Lilybæum, knew his Sicily well, gives us also glimpses of Enna, Lilybæum, Messana, and Segesta. There are Bohn's translations of all. (George Bell and Sons.) To save space I have bound together Cicero's oration against Verres; the portion of Livy (books xxiv. to xxvii.) which relates to the siege of Syracuse by the Romans; the portion of Thucydides which relates to the Athenian expedition to Syracuse; the few pages from Cicero's *Republic*, *De Deorum Natura*, and Tusculan orations; and the hundred pages of Goethe's *Travels in Italy* (Bohn's Library) which relate to Sicily. They form one moderate-sized octavo volume. With these should be taken the volumes of the Temple Classics *Plutarch* (Dent) which contain the lives of Dion, Scipio Africanus, and Marcellus. If you take no other books but guide-books, take your *Verres* and your *Plutarch*; it is from them that you learn the real life of ancient Sicily; both are written in such a familiar strain that you know almost as much about the Syracusan of Dionysius's day as you do about his descendant of to-day.

Another book which throws a great light upon the subject is the ancient Greek novel, entitled *The Loves of Chæreas and Callirrhoe*, purporting to have been written at Syracuse in the time of Dionysius, which is discussed at length in Chapter xvii.

I send my books, sewn up in unbleached calico, by parcel post to await my arrival in Sicily. You can send 11 lbs. weight for half a crown. If you mean to enjoy Sicily go first to the Villa Politi at Syracuse, and study before you go, or send, with the above-mentioned books, Freeman's great *History of Sicily* (four volumes, Clarendon Press); Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (three volumes, Murray); Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography* (two volumes, Murray); Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (Murray). These are a perfect gold mine to the traveller who intends to understand his classical Sicily. Ancient Syracuse alone occupies

PREFACE

fourteen pages, and endless light is thrown on the subject by turning up such entries as Demeter (Ceres), Persephone (Proserpine), Cicero, Verres, Plato, Pyrrhus, Marcellus, Dionysius, Scipio Africanus, Archimedes, Empedocles, Pindar, Æschylus, Theocritus, Hamilcar, Chariton. While in the *Dictionary of Antiquities* you will find all the details about houses and temples, home life, and religion. There is also a translation, published by Chatto, of Guhl and Koner's admirably named *Life of the Greeks and Romans*, which ladies especially will find very useful on account of its numerous illustrations and popular style. I found it a most suggestive book, much more useful than Bekker's *Charicles*.

For guide-books both Murray and Baedeker are indispensable. Murray for scholarly information; Baedeker, of which an edition was issued so late as last year, for the most recent information about hotels, railways, and cabs. Johanne is useful for those who can read French, because it is on such very different lines. The Italian guide-book, published by the Fratelli Treves, is a mixture of Baedeker and syrup; it is difficult to gauge the relative importance of any place described in it. Italians have no sense of proportion. There are excellent books published in German, for the Germans travel more in Sicily than any other foreigners, and like to do things thoroughly. Chiesi's large illustrated book on Sicily is interminable, but it is worth buying, because its numerous and badly executed pictures indicate most of the things which are worth seeing. Vuillier's *Sicily*, published in French and Italian, is worth buying for its beautiful pictures only, but foreign books about Sicily are more easily bought in Palermo than in London. The best of all Sicilian guide-books is the Guide to Palermo, published by Reber, of Palermo, in French and Italian, one of the best guide-books I have ever handled. There is also a good local guide-book in Italian to Syracuse.

Other books on Sicily worth taking are Andrew Lang's *Theocritus* (Macmillan) to understand how unchanged the country life round Syracuse has been in 2,000 years; Miss Hutton's *Greek Terra-Cotta*

IN SICILY

Statuettes (Seeley, 7s. net), some pictures from which are reproduced in this work, by kind permission of the publisher, so as to understand the fascinating Greek terra-cottas which meet you at every turn; John Addington Symonds' *Sketches in Italy* (Tauchnitz edition), and Freeman's short *History of Sicily* (Unwin).

Coming to books on modern Sicily, there are *Brydone's Tour Through Sicily and Malta*, written 150 years ago (always to be bought for 4s. or 5s.), and Goethe's *Travels in Italy* (Bohn's Library). I take also vols. iii. and iv. of Sir Harris Nicholas's *Despatches and Letters of Nelson*, who spent many months in Sicily; Mrs. Eliot's *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*; and vol. ii. of Mrs. Mozley's *Letters and Correspondence of J. H. Newman* (Longmans), which contains the letters and diary he wrote about his Sicilian trip. Small Greek and Roman histories are most useful.

The best brief account of events in Sicily during the present century is Professor Orsi's *Modern Italy* (Unwin). There is a great deal about Nelson in Sicily in chaps. xv. to xxi. of J. C. Jeaffreson's *The Queen of Naples and Lord Nelson*, and chaps. xiv. to xxvii. of Jeaffreson's *Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson*. These are the principal books about Sicily which the traveller who wishes to see Sicily properly should study before he goes, or take with him. I feel that it would be bad taste in me to discriminate between recently published books on Sicily.

My illustrations are derived from several sources. First and foremost come the thirteen plates from oil paintings, especially executed for this work by Miss Margaret Thomas, the artist-author of that fascinating work, *Two Years in Palestine and Syria*. Next to these in individual interest are the pictures reproduced from old engravings, mostly taken from prints out of unprocurable works like Raphael Politi's *Il Viaggiatore* in Girgenti (1826) and Vincenzo Politi's *Guida per Le Antichità di Siracusa*, lent to me by Mme. Politi. The bulk of the illustrations are reproduced by special permission from photographs by the world-famous houses of Alinari Bros., at

PREFACE

Florence ; Sommer, at Naples ; G. Crupi, at Taormina ; G. Incorpora, at Palermo ; and the excellent but less-known G. Marziani, at Taormina. To these, by the greatest good fortune, I was able to add special photographs of the antiquities at Selinunte, taken by Professor Salinas, Director of the Palermo Museum ; of the vintaging at Marsala, by Mr. R. B. Cossins ; and various street scenes, by Mr. Alex. Smith, of Palermo ; and Mr. E. B. Cochrane, of Hill House, P.Q., Canada. The little vignettes of peasant life in Sicily, forty or fifty in number, are from photographs taken by myself.

In conclusion, besides Mr. E. Neville Rolfe, British Consul at Naples, author of the standard works on Pompeii and the Naples Museum, I have to thank many kind friends in Sicily for help in the preparation of this book. Thanks are due in the first place to Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Whitaker, of the Via Cavour, Palermo ; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Whitaker and Miss N. Whitaker, of Malfitano, Palermo ; and Mr. Robert Whitaker, of the Villa Sofia, Palermo, who not only placed their houses at Marsala and Castelvetro at our disposal, but supplied me directly or indirectly with nearly the whole of the first-hand information given in this work. The facts in the chapter on Marsala, and other technical subjects, were written by the head of the great wine firm of Ingham, Whitaker, and Co., of Marsala and Palermo (Mr. Joshua Whitaker) himself ; and much information was collected for me by Mr. Charles Gray, Mr. Alexander Smith, and Mr. R. B. Cossins in their offices.

Next to them I have to thank Mr. W. Beaumont Gardner, the English banker of Palermo ; the Marquis Antonio de Gregorio, who owns the palace occupied by Nelson at Palermo, and procured me the *entrée* to various palaces of Sicilian nobles which are not shown to the general public ; Prince Scalea, the well-known antiquary ; Professor A. Salinas, the Director of the Palermo Museum, and *the authority par excellence* on Sicilian antiquities, who gave me the run of the museum and placed at my disposal the materials on which my museum chapter is founded and some of the most

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interesting pictures in the volume; Mr. Reber, the principal bookseller of Palermo; Mme. Politi, of the Villa Politi, at Syracuse, for the loan of rare books and the facilities for seeing objects at Syracuse not shown to the general public; Professor Orsi, Director of the Syracuse Museum, for the fresh topographical information about Syracuse; Professor Celi, for similar information about Girgenti; and Mr. A. J. Evans, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, for permission to quote from articles written by his father-in-law, the late Professor Freeman. And, lastly, I have to thank five great London publishing houses—to wit, Messrs. Sands and Co., for giving me *carte blanche* in the production of this book; the proprietors of *The Queen*, for allowing me to use sixteen blocks of Sicilian pictures which have appeared in that journal; Messrs. Chatto and Windus, for allowing me to use two blocks from Guhl and Koner's *Life of the Greeks and Romans*; Messrs. Cassell and Co. and the editor of the *Magazine of Art*, for allowing me to use two blocks from an article I wrote for them on the "Portraits of Nelson"; and Messrs. Ward, Lock, and Co. and the editor of the *Windsor Magazine*, for allowing me to use two blocks from an article I wrote for them on "The Footsteps of Nelson in The Two Sicilies."

The onerous task of arranging the items in the Index alphabetically, grouping them under headings, and verifying them, is the work of Miss E. M. Phipps.

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EXPLANATION OF THE COVER

THE TRINACRIA

PROFESSOR A. SALINAS, Director of the National Museum at Palermo, who has afforded me so much help in the preparation of this book, has added to his other kindnesses by giving me the true history of the Trinacria, the three-legged Coat-of-arms which forms the design on my cover.

"The Trinacria or Triquetra has represented Sicily officially since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Up to that time Sicily was represented, heraldically, by the Arms of Sicily-Aragon, the *pali* of Aragon quartered in the Cross of St. Andrew with the Swabian Eagle.

"In the ancient coins of Panormo, of the Roman period, one finds the Trinacria with the Greek legend of the Panormitans, *IIANOPMITAN*. Marabitti in the well-known 'Palermo' of the Villa Giulia, copied the design from these coins. The Arms of the city of Palermo were never the Trinacria, but the Gold Eagle on a Red Field, or a figure holding a snake."

SKELETON HISTORY OF SICILY

WITH THE PRINCIPAL DATES

B.C.	B.C.
735. Naxos is founded.	473-469. Pindar at the Court of Hiero, at Syracuse.
734. Syracuse is founded.	467. Thrasybulus, Tyrant of Syracuse.
732. Zancle (Messana), now <i>Messina</i> , is founded.	467. Simonides, the lyric poet, dies at Syracuse.
729. Catana, now <i>Catania</i> , is founded.	459-440. Ducetius, the Sikelian, founds the only native power in the whole history of Sicily.
729. Leontini, now <i>Lentini</i> , is founded.	444. Empedocles flourishes at Acragas.
728. Megara Hyblea is founded.	436-356. Philistus, historian of Syracuse, flourishes.
688. Gela, now <i>Terranova</i> , is founded.	427. Athens first interferes in Sicily for Leontini.
648. Himera, now <i>Termini</i> , is founded.	415-413. The Athenian Expedition to Syracuse.
632. Stesichorus, the poet of Himera, is born.	413. The whole Athenian force is captured.
628. Selinus, now <i>Selinunte</i> , is founded.	409. Hannibal, son of Gisco, destroys Selinunte.
599. Camarina is founded.	409. Hannibal, son of Gisco, destroys Himera.
599. Acragas (Agrigentum), now <i>Girgenti</i> , is founded.	406. Hannibal, son of Gisco, destroys Acragas.
570-554. Phalaris, Tyrant of Acragas.	405-367. Dionysius I., Lord of Syracuse.
540-450. Epicharmus, of Syracuse, comic poet.	402. Syracuse, the greatest city in Europe.
505. Gelon, Tyrant of Gela.	402. Enna is captured by Dionysius.
488-472. Theron, Tyrant of Acragas.	398. Dionysius' war against the Carthaginians. He destroys Motya.
486. Æschylus, the dramatist, dies at Gela.	
485. Gelon, Tyrant of Syracuse.	
480. Battle of Salamis. Continental Greeks defeat Persians.	
480. Battle of Himera. Sicilian Greeks defeat Carthaginians.	
480-376. Gorgias, of Leontini, orator.	
478-467. Hiero I., Tyrant of Syracuse.	

IN SICILY

B.C.

- 397. Lilybæum, now *Marsala*, is founded.
- 396. Tauromenium, now *Taormina*, is founded.
- 389. Plato visiting Dionysius at Syracuse is sold as a slave.
- 367. Dionysius II. succeeds his father.
- 361-262. Philemon of Syracuse, comic poet.
- 358-344. Andromachus, father of the historian Timæus, Tyrant of Tauromenium, now *Taormina*.
- 356. Dion expels Dionysius II., and establishes his Government.
- 357. Return of Dion.
- 354. Dion dies.
- 352-256. Timæus, historian of Tauromenium.
- 346. Restoration of Dionysius II.
- 344. Dionysius is exiled to Corinth.
- 344. Timoleon comes to Sicily.
- 339. Timoleon defeats the Carthaginians at the great victory of the Crimessus.
- 338. Abdication of Timoleon.
- 336. Timoleon dies.
- 317-289. Agathocles, Tyrant of Syracuse.
- 315 (about). Theocritus is born at Syracuse.
- 284 (about). Theocritus goes to Alexandria.
- 270 (about). Theocritus returns to Syracuse.
- 310-307. Agathocles besieges Carthage.
- 289. Agathocles dies.
- 288-278. Hicetas, Tyrant of Syracuse.
- 289. Phintias, Tyrant of Acragas.
- 287-212. Archimedes, mathematician and engineer, flourishes at Syracuse.
- 285. Dicaearchus, philosopher of Messana, dies.

B.C.

- 278. Tyndarion, Tyrant of Tauromenium, invites Pyrrhus to Sicily.
- 278-276. Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, invades Sicily.
- 270-215. Hiero II., King of Syracuse.
- 260 (about). Drepanum, now *Trapani*, date of foundation unknown, is refounded by Hamilcar Barca.
- 264-241. First Punic War.
- 254. Panormos, now *Palermo*, date of foundation by the Phœnicians unknown, is taken by the Romans.
- 247-242. Hamilcar, father of Hannibal, maintains himself on Heircte (Monte Pellegrino).
- 242 (March 10th). The Carthaginians are defeated in the Battle of the Ægæan Islands, which ends the first Punic War.
- 241. Sicily becomes a Roman province.
- 215. Hieronymus, King of Syracuse.
- 210. Acragas is captured by the Romans.
- 214. Syracuse is invested by Marcellus.
- 212. „ captured „
- 205. Scipio Africanus prepares at Syracuse for his conquest of Carthage.
- 202. Scipio Africanus sails from Lilybæum.
- 139. Revolt of the Slaves at Enna.
- 139. Eunus, the Slave, is proclaimed King of Sicily.
- 135-132. First Slave War.
- 103. Tryphon, the Slave, is proclaimed King of Sicily.
- 103-101. Second Slave War.
- 75. Cicero Quæstor in Sicily (at Lilybæum).
- 73-70. Verres Prætor in Sicily.
- 70. Cicero's indictment of Verres.

DATES OF SICILIAN HISTORY

B.C.	A.D.
42-36. Sextus Pompeius, Master of Sicily.	965. The Saracens take Rometta, the last Sicilian city to hold out.
36. Augustus lands at Tauromenium in his victorious campaign against Sextus Pompeius.	1038-1042. George Maniace wins victories over the Saracens.
27. Sicily becomes the first of the Ten Senatorial Provinces.	1060. The Normans take Messina.
25 (about). Ovid spends a year in Sicily.	1071. " " Palermo.
21. Augustus makes his tour in Sicily.	1078. " " Taormina.
8 (about). Diodorus Siculus begins writing his history.	1085. " " Syracuse.
A.D.	1086. " " Girgenti.
62. St. Paul lands at Syracuse for three days.	" " Castrogiovanni.
126 or 127. The Emperor Hadrian visits Sicily.	1090. " " Noto.
395. Sicily is attached to the Western Empire.	1068. Roger defeats the Saracens at Misilmeri.
440. Genserich, King of the Vandals, invades Sicily.	1090. All Sicily is subdued by the Normans under Count Roger I.
535. Belisarius adds Sicily to the Eastern Empire.	1101. Roger I. (the Great Count) dies.
555. Pope Vigilius dies at Syracuse.	1001-1105. Simon, Count of Sicily.
663-668. Syracuse capital of Sicily under the Eastern Empire.	1105. Roger II. succeeds.
665. The Saracens first land in Sicily.	1130. Roger II. crowned <i>King of Sicily and Italy</i> at Palermo.
668. The Emperor Constans is murdered at Syracuse.	1154-1166. William I. (the Bad), son of King Roger, King.
827. The Saracens, invited by Euphemius of Syracuse, land at Mazzara.	1166-1189. William II. (the Good), son of William I., King.
827. The Commencement of the Saracen Conquest.	1189-1194. Tancred, natural son of Roger II., King.
831. The Saracens take Palermo and make it a capital.	1189. Richard Cœur de Lion at Messina.
843. The Saracens take Messina.	1194. William III., son of Tancred, King.
859. The Saracens take Enna (now <i>Castrogiovanni</i>).	1194-1197. Henry VI., Emperor of Germany (husband of Constance, daughter of Roger II.), King.
878. The Saracens take Syracuse.	1197-1254. Frederick I. (Frederick II. Emperor of Germany), son of Henry and Constance, crowned 1198, King.
908. The Saracens take Tauromenium (now <i>Taormina</i>) the second time.	1250-1254. Conrad, King of the Romans, second son of Frederick I., King.
	1254-1268. Conradin, son of Conrad, King.
	1250-1254. Manfred, natural son of Frederick II., usurps the crown.

IN SICILY

- A.D.
1266. Charles of Anjou is crowned King of Sicily by the Pope.
 . Edward I. of England's first visit to Trapani.
 . Edward I. of England's second visit to Trapani.
- 1282 (March 31st). The Sicilian Vespers, massacre of the French.
- 1282-1285. Peter of Aragon, husband of Manfred's daughter Constance, becomes Peter I. of Sicily.
- 1285-1296. James the Just, second son of Peter I., King.
- 1296-1337. Frederick II., third son of Peter I., King.
- 1337-1342. Peter II., King.
- 1342-1355. Louis, King.
- 1355-1377. Frederick III., brother of Louis, King.
- 1377-1402. Mary, daughter of Frederick III., marries in 1385 Martin of Aragon.
1392. Andrew Chiaramonte aspires to the throne; is beheaded.
- 1402-1409. Martin I., King.
- 1409-1410. Martin II., father of Martin I., King.
- 1412-1416. Ferdinand, King of Aragon, King.
- 1416-1458 Alphonso of Aragon, King.
- 1458-1479. John of Aragon, King.
- 1479-1515. Ferdinand II. (the Catholic), King.
- 1516-1554. Charles I. (Emperor Charles V.), King.
1517. Squarcialupo's Rebellion at Palermo.
- 1554-1598. Philip II. of Spain, King.
- 1598-1621. Philip III., King.
- 1621-1665. Philip IV., King.
- 1665-1700. Charles II., King.
- A.D.
1672. Rising at Messina.
1676. Admiral de Ruyter defeated by the French off Augusta, and dies of his wounds at Syracuse.
- 1700-1713. Philip V. of Spain, King.
- 1713-1720. Victor Amadeus of Savoy, King.
- 1720-1734. Emperor Charles VI. of Germany, King.
- 1735-1759. Charles III., King.
- 1759-1825. Ferdinand IV., King of Naples and Sicily, King.
- 1787 (April 2nd to May 14th). Goethe's visit to Sicily—Palermo, Segesta, Girgenti, Castrogiovanni, Catania, Taormina, Messina, etc.
- 1815-1825. *Kingdom of the Two Sicilies*. Ferdinand I. (same as Ferdinand IV. above), King.
- 1798 (July 20th to 22nd). Nelson at Syracuse watering his Fleet for the Battle of the Nile.
1798. (Dec. 23rd) First flight of Ferdinand and Maria Caroline to Sicily from the French.
- 1798 (Dec. 26th) to 1799 (May 19th). Nelson at Palermo.
- 1799 (May 20th to 28th). Nelson off Maritimo.
- 1799 (May 29th to June 21st). Nelson at Palermo, etc.
- 1799 (Aug. 8th to Oct. 4th). Nelson at Palermo.
- 1799 (Oct. 22nd) to 1800 (Jan. 15th). Nelson at Palermo.
- 1800 (Feb. 3rd to 18th). Nelson at Palermo, etc.
- 1800 (March 16th to April 24th). Nelson at Palermo.
- 1800 (April 30th to May 3rd). Nelson at Syracuse.

DATES OF SICILIAN HISTORY

A.D.

- 1800 (June 1st to June 10th). Nelson at Palermo.
1805. Second flight of Ferdinand and Maria Caroline to Sicily from the French.
- 1806-1815. Sicily under English protection.
1812. Sicily receives a Constitution through Lord William Bentinck, British Minister in Sicily.
1815. Ferdinand goes back to Naples.
1820. First rising of Sicily against the Bourbons.
- 1833 (Feb.). Cardinal Newman's first visit to Sicily; (April to June) second visit. Messina, Catania, Taormina, Syracuse, Castrogiovanni, Segesta, Palermo.

A.D.

1836. Second rising of Sicily against the Bourbons.
1848. First revolution in Sicily against the Bourbons.
- 1860 (May 11th). Garibaldi lands at Marsala.
- 1860 (May 27th). Garibaldi takes Palermo.
- 1860 (Oct. 21st). Sicily joins the kingdom of Italy by plebiscite.

THE KINGDOM OF UNITED ITALY.

- 1861-1878. Victor Emmanuel II.
- 1878-1900. Humbert I.
- 1900 (July 29th) Victor Emmanuel III.
1896. Visit of William II, Emperor of Germany, to Sicily.

TO THE READER

THIS book was not written because it is a wonderful thing to visit Sicily, but because it is easy and cheap. I aim at interesting the reader rather than instructing him. I shall be satisfied if I make him wish to go to Sicily, and, when he is there, study his Sicily for himself, and grasp how much there is to see. I record my own impressions, and where I could get correct information I give it and mention its source; but people will not enjoy the country any more because it is proved to them beyond doubt that Agathocles built the great theatre at Taormina, though they will enjoy it more if they have been induced by the enticingness of my description to visit, instead of miss, Taormina.

I have generally used the Latin and not the Greek form of a proper name, as coming nearer the Italian form used by guides and peasants. Zeus and Hera mean nothing to them, but Jove and Juno come near enough to Giove and Giunone to be recognised. In most places where the Greek spelling creeps in, it is an oversight; but one word, Sikelian, I spell in the Greek way to distinguish it from Sicilian.

PART I.

TAORMINA

A MOUNTAIN PARADISE AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT Etna



CHAPTER I.

LANDING IN SICILY

THE CURSE OF SICILY—FACCHINI

THE *facchino* is the curse of Italy, and yet more of Sicily. I do not know how much the *facchino* has to pay for his licence, but as it converts a pauper who would have been upon the rates into a porter licensed to prey upon strangers, there is no reason why the charge should be a very heavy one.

It was not until we arrived at Messina on our second journey to Sicily that we realised the full iniquity of the system. Having already tipped the steward, we paid one set of porters to carry our luggage from the ship to the boat. Then we paid the fare for being boated to the shore. Italian steamers hardly ever run alongside, and the fare is generally a franc and a half a head if you have luggage. Then another



Photo by G. Oak.

THE GATES OF SICILY
SCYLLA (IN CALABRIA) AND CHARYBDIS

IN SICILY

set of porters had to be paid for taking our luggage from the landing-steps to the custom-house, and another set—or the same set over again—for taking it from the custom-house to the railway station. It cost our party of five nearly twenty francs to go with our luggage from our steamer to the station, which was right opposite to where we lay. The authorities of Messina are in the swindle with the porters, for there is a custom-house in the railway station and they



THE HARBOUR OF MESSINA

From a coloured print in "General Cockburn's Voyage to Sicily, 1815."

would not allow us to land there, but sent us away to another custom-house, between half a mile and a mile from the station. Until the municipal authorities of Sicily wake up, and crush this porters' conspiracy with a strong hand, they need not hope to get the English, especially invalids, to go there in any numbers. To fight with a lot of blackmailing porters is enough to kill a delicate invalid.

But we had to thank the *facchini* for something on that tour, though it was not at Messina, but still earlier, just before we left Naples, that it happened. We had come by sea all the way from

THE CURSE OF SICILY

Genoa, according to our wont, and, having our luggage already on board, we were just hanging about when an old American gentleman and lady came alongside. Because they were Americans—and all Americans are supposed to be millionaires in Italy—possibly also because they were old and not very strong, the boatman, and the porters who carried up their wraps, were demanding preposterous sums, and the villain of an interpreter they had with them was



Photo 34

[Alinari.]

THE LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

IN S. MARIA DELLA SCALA

doing nothing to protect them. He was of course telling them what they had to pay, and had his understanding with the other men as to the distribution of the plunder. Mr. Heriot, as I shall call him, was accustomed to paying twice too much for everything, but even he felt obliged to remonstrate on this occasion. The men became very abusive, almost violent. Knowing the Italians, I knew that this violence was bluff; but Mrs. Heriot was evidently so frightened that I felt it was about time to interfere. I told them

IN SICILY

what the tariff was, and that a couple of francs above it would be a really lordly *buonomano*. Then I told the men in Italian that if they did not take it thankfully they should only have their bare tariff; so they made the best of the job and took it.

Mr. and Mrs. Heriot looked profoundly grateful, not for the mere money I saved them, the amount of which was not of any consequence to them, but because Mrs. Heriot was really frightened at what the men might do. Presently they went below, and we thought no more about it, for we saw a boat coming across the harbour with a white dress in its stern. The girl came on board our ship. Her prettiness, her taste in dress, the way she carried herself, would either of them have secured attention. A young man was with her, the kind of young man who has just left the University.

We saw them again at dinner. He seemed very much taken up with her. She accepted his attention with ease, and had a nice manner when my boy passed her the mustard. Our American friends were not at dinner, though *we* did not feel the motion after coming down from Genoa in the teeth of the sirocco.

The boat arrived at Messina before we got up. This is a trick of the Mediterranean boats.

I had seen Etna through my port-hole as I lay in the top bunk. It was snowed half-way down, just as I remember Fujiyama. I was full of it when I came out of my cabin to have my coffee and roll. Mr. and Mrs. Heriot were already in the saloon. I spoke of Etna's likeness to Fujiyama, and soon the conversation drifted to our destinations. They, too, were going to Taormina, and were in some consternation about an hotel, as a telegram had just been brought to them that the Timeo was full. I told them that we were going to the "Victoria," a typical Sicilian inn, dear to generations of artists—too rough for them. But they were evidently timid and inclined to take refuge behind my acquaintance with Sicily and the Italian tongue. They wished to go to the "Victoria," if it would not be intruding upon us. They promised, quite unnecessarily, not to be a trouble if I would, when we got to the station for Taormina, ask the hotel conductor if they could have rooms, and tell him to

LANDING AT MESSINA

see them and their baggage to the hotel. They were a curious mixture of native intelligence, and the blankest ignorance about foreign travel. And then, just before it was time to land, the girl we had been watching the night before came into the saloon, radiant, and kissed them papa and mamma, and a minute or two later the young man came in to shake hands with them and say that he had "got the baggage down to a fine point."

LANDING AT MESSINA

I always wonder what we should have paid for that landing at Messina if we had not fought the sharks, tooth and nail, at every stage. The young man had entered into the spirit of the thing. "You tell me what to do," he said, "and I'll stick to it with my dead body."

We were almost torn to pieces by rival porters at the landing. We were dragged like prisoners to the custom-house, where the official, hearing an American accent, did not open a single package. We were hurried off to the railway station as if the city had been suffering from yellow fever, and when we got there were told that it was the Palermo train which was going soon, and that there were about two hours to wait for the Taormina train. We were never formally introduced to Miss Heriot; but the way that girl plunged into the fray at the landing and the custom-house, smiling and unruffled—she did not even take the beauty off her gloves in the fierce wrestle for the baggage—made any introduction superfluous. Something very particular must have kept her at Naples after her parents, and they would never have needed our protection if she had been there, though the porters would have made more money out of the job.

MESSINA

I shall not write anything about Messina. Whenever I have been there my great desire has always been to get out of it as soon as possible. The approach to it, with the long arm of Calabria

IN SICILY

stretched after you, and the mountains of Sicily rising to block your way ; with the gay ripples of Scylla and Charybdis making the calm, blue waters glitter, and the sails of countless fishing *barcas* suspended between Sicily and Italy, is charming. You seem to have known the tall yellow pharos and the sickle-shaped harbour all your life. The cathedral is a pretty little weather-stained bit of black and



Photo by P. L. S.

THE CATHEDRAL OF MESSINA

white. The streets are fine enough. There are various old forts on various heights ; but it is better to pass on, for if you examine Messina closely you find that it is a city of obliterations, and that man only is responsible for them here, which cannot be urged against that equally uninteresting place, Catania.

Verres began them by helping himself to the household gods of Caius Heius. And most other commanders who have followed

SICILIAN SCENERY

him have followed his example, including our own Richard Cœur-de-Lion on his way to the Crusades. Richard erected a gallows for thieves outside the gates of Messina; it ought to be there now. Evidently the *facchini* of Messina were an institution even in his day, just as the municipal authorities of the Messina of to-day are the lineal descendants of those who are pilloried in the pages of Cicero as colluding in the extortions of Verres.

SICILIAN SCENERY

The railway journey from Messina to Taormina is beautiful—not so beautiful, I think, to the uninitiated eye as many journeys in countries nearer England. But to me there is something magnetic, or perhaps I should say hypnotic, in Sicilian scenery.

It is not that you see much architecture, though most rocks which were suitable for robber-barons' castles were used. It is not that the mountains, other than Etna, are particularly lofty. And except in a few spots, such as the district round Palermo, you see few traces of the historic fertility of the Island. But after a while you find sympathy with Sicily getting into your very bones. You realise the geological slowness with which Sicily and the Sicilians change. You seem to see the wheels of God grinding, hardly moving, irresistibly. When you know the history of the country, when you know the grim, suppressed aspirations of its people, slumbering like Etna, then you feel that the mighty, seemingly lifeless volcano, the sea of mountains whose sides are precipices, the rivers with dried-up beds, down which murderous torrents rush in flood-time to the sea, and the thickets of grizzly, prickly pears, looking, as they wither, like wicked old men, are the appropriate setting for the rich vineyards and olive gardens and the meadows whose broad smile of flowers gave Sicily its old name of "the laughing land."

WHAT THE SICILIANS ARE LIKE

And the Sicilians; you do not see them laughing and chattering like Neapolitans. The Sicilian is always waiting, perhaps looking

IN SICILY

out. He is grave and sunburnt. Except in large towns he still wears top-boots and, at morning and evening, and in bad weather, his huge, dark blue, hooded-cloak. The country Sicilian, when he is not wearing top-boots, has his legs bandaged and his feet thrust into sandals of raw hide, like his ancestors for many generations. On his head he wears a stocking-cap, or more often has it hooded in a red handkerchief, and he still wears the short butchers' blue jacket and breeches. The country Sicilian is clean-shaven, or affects the mutton-chop Spanish whiskers. He is almost always mounted on mule or ass, and often armed. Game laws are wanting or unobserved. You see the poorest with guns and dogs, but no game, except in passing flights from Africa.

The Sicilian does not live in the country. He has been familiar with the raids of Saracens and brigands, and the Sicilian brigand is more merciless than a Saracen. He never hesitates to kill; there is no capital punishment, and if he is killed red-handed the loss of the *carabinieri* will be greater, for they are sure to be fighting at a disadvantage. The poor may be against the brigand, but they are afraid not to support him; they know that he is a fiend, and they dread capricious murder. Probably they are dreading a shadow of what is past; but the influence remains, and they live in the towns, riding out at dawn to their work, and leaving it at dusk. While they are working, their donkeys look after their own saddles and their masters' cloaks. Wherever you see a man at work in the country his beast is grazing near. In the heat of the day the man, and often the beast as well, takes his siesta—not always in the shade. And they work in heavy silence. Even the women, with their Madonna-faces framed in gay handkerchiefs, are grave and silent as they jog along, half a dozen, or even a dozen of them, in the highly-coloured, two-wheeled Sicilian cart. It is only in the great towns, which are becoming Italianised, that the Sicilian silence is broken.

Alfred Parsons, the brilliant A.R.A. who wrote and illustrated such a charming book about Japan, told me that he had often thought of writing and illustrating a book about the wild flowers of Sicily. They are truly astonishing, but not at their best here.

SICILIAN RAILWAYS

THE SCENERY BETWEEN MESSINA AND TAORMINA

The scenery we saw on our journey to Taormina may be dismissed in a very few words. Bluff, Japanese-looking, earthquaky hills bristled with thin prickly pear; lemon groves, as close as a field of corn, in the alluvial land round the river mouths; dry river-beds, all pebbles and sand; olives on rocky hillsides; here and there the shell of a Moresco castle; patches of yellow blossom, broom, genesta, or the Sicilian weed that will come so often into these pages; patches of pink blossom, rest-harrow, thyme, and the classical asphodel; a few eucalypti (which generally imply malaria) round the railway stations; and always on our left the still, blue sea and the long arm of Calabria. This was by way of being an express train, so it was "Partenza—Pronti!" (Going—Ready!) almost directly the train drew up. There was no opportunity for the display of the little idiosyncrasies of Sicilian station-life, beyond the two tall *carabinieri* solemnly leaving the train, taking a turn up and down the platform, and with equal gravity re-entering the train to remind people that they are properly protected from brigandage. An omnibus-train on the Marsala line gives more chance; there you will find on the platform beside you in almost



Photo 511

[Marsala]

A WOMAN OF THE PROVINCE OF MESSINA

IN SICILY

any little station a stall with a regular dinner, meat possibly, certainly bread, wine, cooked eggs, cheese, and fennel most attractively sliced.

Nor is the line here one long avenue of giant rose-geraniums.

GIARDINI, THE RAILWAY STATION FOR TAORMINA

Clearly the *Rete Sicula* did not give much heed to this section of its lines. It was, for Sicily, an uninteresting journey; we were doubly glad to get to our destination, and our first bed on land for five days. At Giardini, the station at the foot of the mountain upon which Taormina stands, we were met by little Nino, who was only a pretty child in 1896. He had blossomed out into a hotel *portiere* with "H. Victoria" on a yachting cap in the orthodox style. Nino, who was, I daresay, only fourteen now, considered himself perfectly competent to promise the Heriots adequate accommodation, and to arrange for transporting them and their luggage to their hotel. As for us, Don Pancrazio, the proprietor's eldest son, was waiting with a carriage to welcome us back. But he did not, as we should have preferred, take any part in resisting the pretensions of the *fachini* with whom we finally compounded at twenty cents for each trunk they lifted out of the train, and ten cents for each hand-package, a rate upon which I told the young American, Mr. Witheridge, to insist.

"Let me be sure I am right," he said, "and I'll stick to it with my dead body." That was evidently his form of affirmation.

THE NEED OF A FUNICULAR FROM GIARDINI TO TAORMINA

There ought to be a funicular from Giardini station up to Taormina. It would be good for the people of Giardini, which is malarious, because then they would not have to live there any longer, but could sleep at Taormina and go down to their work. It would be decidedly good for Tauromenians, because the journey up would then only take about a minute instead of about an hour, and they would have to pay about twenty cents instead of two francs, which is what a seat in a carriage costs. Possibly the saving expense would not strike an Italian in the same way. He looks at things with the

THE DRIVE TO TAORMINA

eye of the Melbourne watchmaker, who was quite content to pay a heavy duty on every article of clothing and every article of food, in order that the infinitesimal section of the community who liked to have their watches made for them by a local bungler might pay a fancy price for them. The attractions of Taormina would be doubled if there was such a funicular, for there are a great many interesting places within easy distance of it by rail, if one had not to face the climb up and down at the ends of the journey. And there is so little to do in Taormina itself.

THE DRIVE UP TO TAORMINA

As we drove slowly up the zigzags we seemed to be repeating the experience of a day before, instead of two years before. Don Pancrazio pointed out the Russian baroness's charming villa in almost the same words, and the Saracens' graves honeycombed in the rock like gigantic hornets' nests, or empty coffin niches in a modern Campo Santo. He informed us once more that the charge for not having our trunks examined by the *octroi* was fifty centesimi to the officer-in-charge. The same stout, bearded officer-in-charge, of whom we used to inquire the way in 1896, took the fifty centesimi as an ordinary business transaction. And then, with a great cracking of whips we dashed up the narrow, flagged Corso of Taormina, and drew up in front of the *basso* which admits to the Hotel Victoria, much, I fancy, to the horror of the Heriots and Mr. Witheridge.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF TAORMINA

ETNA AND BRIGANDS

TAORMINA means Etna, but not climbing Etna, if you are at all of a timid disposition. For Etna is not only a long way off, and a good stiff climb, but rather brigandy. Under Etna, on the far side, is a most historical estate, belonging to an English nobleman, which is managed by his son, who bears a marked facial resemblance to the mighty warrior to whom the estate was granted by a grateful Sicilian king. Numerous plots have been made to carry this gentleman off and to hold him to ransom, although a vast number of poor people subsist on the industry to which he has given a new life by the introduction of scientific methods. On one occasion he received a letter from a particularly villainous brigand, who was in prison with atrocious charges hanging over his head. This man desired him to come and bear witness on his behalf in the Court of Catania on such a day. An unusually complete plan for carrying the Englishman off had apparently been on the eve of execution, and had been stopped by this old villain, who thought that carrying off such a well-known Englishman might deter wealthy visitors from coming to the island. Whether the old gentleman meant to be content with the gradual infiltration of the money of these tourists through ordinary channels, or thought that they would make good quarry for his particular business, did not appear. But the answer was just such an answer as would have been given by the heroic man to whom the estate was granted.



THE THEATRE OF TAORMINA

WITH PISA AND THE SHORE OF MESSINA IN THE BACKGROUND

Photo by Couplé

"I never knew that Nature could be so beautiful. To see that view was the nearest approach to seeing Eden. Oh, happy I! It was worth coming all the way, to admire and see how things were so fit. I had for the first time in my life that I should be a better and a more religious man if I lived there."

Description of Taormina to a letter of J. D. H. to my fellow-traveller Cardinal Newman to his sister Harriet, April 27th, 1833.

THE ROMANISED GREEK THEATRE

THE ROMANISED GREEK THEATRE

Etna is, after all, best viewed from Taormina, where you see its mighty head stretching up to the clouds, and not always enveloped in them. It looks like an enormous dome with a cap of snow, delicately shaded off on its vast black shoulders. The finest view of Etna is from the famous Roman Theatre, depicted below—the most interesting theatre which has come down to us from antiquity. We have many good Greek theatres, but, as far as I know, no other Romanised theatre comparable to this for showing the general plan and workings. It is also of a very rich colour, and has an absolutely unique position, standing as it does on a hill commanding a long stretch of glorious coast-scenery towards Messina on one side, and towards Catania on the other, though neither of these places are, of course, in view; while stretched at your feet, when you stand upon it, are the exquisite little blue bays; and the moresco-looking town with its mediæval baronial mansions and its conspicuous convent; and above you are the quaint little city of Mola, perched like an eagle's nest upon the mountain peak which overhangs the town; and the Arab castle on a lower peak; and, literally above all, Etna.

You can never tire of looking at Etna, there is such cloud-play on its gigantic summit, and the brilliant lights of the Sicilian dawn and day-set play so lovingly upon it.

In the theatre you can still see the actors' dressing-rooms, and the subterranean passage for working the traps of the stage. As in so many of the theatres of antiquity, the seats were ranged round the horseshoe curves of a hollow hill. The stage buildings, once almost as high as the hill itself, were built across the jaws of the horseshoe. Behind the artificial scenery of the stage there was the eternal scenery of Etna, now peacefully crowned with snow, now spouting forth one of the eruptions which, returning intermittently, have made Catania almost as unantique as London. And there was always a long line of headlands rising out of blue sea to finish off the background.

IN SICILY

THE ARCHITECTURE OF TAORMINA

Architecturally speaking, Taormina is mostly interesting and mostly worthless. This sounds paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true, for its builders were people of most picturesque ideas, derived from all the nations round the Mediterranean, and people of inherently good taste, but their masons were bad, and their materials not chosen with the Italian instinct for good stone. The result is a collection of fantastic, semi-moresco palaces, and a ring-wall and towered gates which even the artillery of the Middle Ages could have demolished with tolerable ease if it had been worthy anybody's while to drag it up the surrounding hills. But Taormina was of no particular value after the time of Count Roger. Nature meant it for what the ancient Romans as well as the moderns have used it—a holiday resort. With the English, at any rate, it is the most popular holiday resort in Sicily, though it has neither superb classical remains like Syracuse, Girgenti, Segesta, and Selinunte, nor footprints of all ages and conquerors like Palermo, the city of palaces.

TAORMINA FOR ARTISTS

There is much to attract visitors at Taormina. If they are artists they find the place more than usually prodigal of colour. To begin with, there is Etna, black and white; the sea here and the sky are of a marvellous blue; there are green hills running right down to the sea, and the gorges and gullies into which the hills run, on the land side, have wild oleanders and wild cyclamens and lovely little brooks. Then there are the green-grey olive gardens; the ruddy hues of the theatre; the rich brown of Mola, and the Arab castle, and the rocks on which they stand, and the walls and towers and palaces, the latter varied by the ornamentation of black lava and white marble, so popular here. Between the town and the sea in spring the wild flowers are glorious, especially the great blue and white lupines, and the spurge, which, instead of being a foot or two high, as in England, will grow six or eight feet high, with a stem almost as thick as a man's

TAORMINA FOR ARTISTS

arm, and huge bunches of yellowish flowers. And the yellow, dusty roads, and the yellow sands below, and the yellow-wash of the houses in the town, and the brilliant kirtles and kerchiefs of the young women, who always have an eye upon the artist, though they give him so much trouble, unite to make the place a blaze of colour. Artists often have great difficulty about getting female models at Taormina. They see fascinating female subjects all day long, but these cannot generally be induced to give sittings until tempted by preposterous prices.

A rapid draughtsman sitting in a window, or a man who can carry effects in his head, however, gets splendid chances, for he will see a charming-looking young girl walking with more grace than a duchess, although she has a pitcher on her head holding two or three gallons of water, and clogs on her feet with only little leather toes to hold them on by.

There is no gainsaying the grace of these water-carriers, with their straight upright figures and beautifully shaped waists. The young South Italian and Sicilian women have superb figures, which—in the lower classes—are the result of carrying heavy burdens on their heads. How they contrive to balance them on their little pads is a marvel to strangers.

In the heat of the day you see very little of the Sicilian young woman outside, except in Palermo, where factories have made her forget the old sex-rules of Sicily. There the lemon-packers troop out for their midday meal as noisily as if they were in the North of England. But inside you can catch plenty of glimpses of her, for there are very few windows in the poorer kind of Sicilian house. The whole of the bottom story consists of one room as wide as an English coachhouse door, with its front consisting of coachhouse doors and nothing else. Whenever the weather admits these are flung open all day long, and Italians can stand nearly any weather. Great heat you would expect them to endure, but they can also endure draughts that would kill most English people, and in the south of Italy and Sicily they hardly know what a fire is. In a city like Syracuse, even in winter, you may look in vain for one

IN SICILY

reek of smoke rising from the house-tops, and it is this as well as the weather which gives the smaller Sicilian towns such astonishing atmospheres. Look in through any of these coachhouse doors, as you pass, and, standing out in bright relief against the darkness of the interior, you will see a woman making yarn with a sort of reel which runs up and down, or making nets, but not often engaged in ordinary household duties, even cooking.



THE TAORMINA
YOUNG WOMAN

*Photo by
the author.*

TAORMINA FOR INDOLENT PEOPLE

So much for the artist. To the indolent—to the infirm like Mrs. Heriot—Taormina is an inexpressibly delightful place, for there is absolutely nothing

to do, except to sun yourself, and to look at Etna, and look at the sea, and go up to the Roman theatre at the popular time to ascertain if there are any new arrivals.

There is, however, a considerable harvest for the quiet eye in Taormina. There are so many bits of quaint old palaces, not valuable architecturally, though they are sometimes exquisitely beautiful; and there are, below the present town, a considerable number of not very important remains of classical times, such as rifled sepulchres of the usual Sicilian type. But the attractions of Taormina may be summed up in one word—picturesque. Its situation is intensely picturesque, and its buildings are mostly picturesque, and its people are the most picturesque posers in Sicily. And while you are content to enjoy a delightful atmosphere and scenery, there are few places to be compared with it. At this stage, Miss Heriot believed that she would never want to go away from it, though she did not seem to

THE SIGHTS OF TAORMINA

be affected with the craving for tête-à-têtes which you expect in an engaged young lady.

THE SIGHTS OF TAORMINA

Every self-respecting Italian city has a Corso Vittore Emmanuele or a Corso Umberto Primo. Taormina consists of a Corso, with a smaller cross street at each end of it, and various little cockspurs, mostly under arches, up or down the steep hillside, throughout its length. I cannot remember the names of any of its smaller streets; its chief buildings are mostly on the Corso, or not in any street at all. It has a cathedral, and four or five churches in going order, and other churches to which worshippers do not go. It has half a dozen or more hotels, most of which have decided merits of one kind or another. It has a Greco-Roman theatre (which Mr. Heriot always called Greek-or-Roman) and which is famous the world over for its beauty and its completeness. It has a little Greek theatre half built over by one of the best churches. It has a castle of doubtful date and architecture, which in the distance makes an exquisite feature in the landscape. It has some curious ruins, which everybody agrees in calling the Naumachia, but nobody can understand. And it has some of the quaintest palaces in Christendom, though they are only big enough for farmhouses. To wit, the palace of the Duke of S. Stefano, which is inhabited by the Marquis or Prince of something else, and is said to have been constructed from the ruins of the great theatre; the Badia, which does not look as if it had ever been connected with a convent, but has the finest site imaginable on a spur of the mountain, with a background of crags and prickly-pear trees; the Palazzo Corvaia, which has more architectural pretensions than any building in the town; and the Palazzo Ciampoli on the main street, which can be recognised at once by the broad and elegant flight of steps leading up to its Gothic façade.

But, after all, there is nothing in the actual town of Taormina (except the theatre) which counts for so much as what you can see, above and below, from the town—Etna, the little town of Mola, perched on a crag like an eagle's nest, and the perished Convent of S. Caterina.

IN SICILY

BUT TAORMINA IS FOR THE INDOLENT, NOT FOR SIGHTSEERS

From the point of view of the indefatigable sightseer, Taormina is easily enough exhausted. You cannot climb Etna from Taormina, and everything else is within a stone's-throw, except the mountain crowned by Mola, Monte Venere, and the little mountain of the castle. In a country like Sicily, so full of the monuments of antiquity, Taormina is not a sightseeing place. It might be described as an artist's place rather than an author's; for an artist must have his sights concentrated, and devote plenty of leisure to each, if he is to show results. The author is stimulated by excursions. Taormina is a place to write at, not a place to write about. If I was sitting down to write this book in Sicily I should choose some such place as Taormina, or Madame Politi's garden at Syracuse, for the work. You need a *dolce far niente* place to write in, and the principal charm of Taormina lies in the *dolce far niente* spirit which its exquisite beauty breathes. Imagine a city perched on a mountain-side with a sea view below its green precipices from almost end to end of the Straits of Messina. Climb to the castle that one of its conquerors built in moresco fashion to overawe it, turn your back to the sea and look above you, and see Mola like a mural crown on the mountain-head. Look to your right, and embosomed in a little hill is the Roman theatre of an indescribable shade between red and pink. Look to your left, and if the day be clear, you will be overpowered with the majesty of Etna rising from the sea, with the long, bold sweep only exceeded in beauty by the sweep of Fujiyama from the Hakone Lake.

TAORMINA LIKE JAPAN

There is something toy-like about Taormina which reminds me of Japan at every step. No one seems to have anything more serious to do than asking or receiving odd jobs from visitors. The women, it is true, out of siesta-hours, may generally be seen at their doors spinning their wheels, or making yarn with a sort of reel by dropping, or knitting or netting; but they give one the idea

TAORMINA PEOPLE



SPINNING IN A TAORMINA STREET

Black & White

that they are doing it not to achieve any industrial result, but because it enables them to strike good attitudes. When I met a beautiful young woman carrying a water-jar on her head I used to feel that she was doing it to show off the queenly lines of her figure, and not because water was wanted at her home. The men working in the fields were certainly persevering in a slow, niggling,

IN SICILY

Japanese way. These Taormina people do not work in the fields much while they are young and paintable; they hang about, and stand out for top prices as models.

ANCIENT GREEK PHOTOGRAPHS

One of the very best photographers in Sicily, or for the matter of that in Italy, is Signor Crupi, in Taormina. He has taken hundreds of charming pictures of the artistic tit-bits — terraces, fountains, well-heads, and what not, with naked, laurel-crowned boys lounging against them to give an ancient Greek effect. Getting paid for being photographed in a laurel wreath on account of his good looks is the Tauromenian's ideal form of work.

TAORMINA IS A LOTUS LAND

And the visitors eat the lotus early. As soon as they have swallowed their first meal they stroll the few yards to the theatre, choose a pleasant spot in the long, fragrant, flower-studded grass of its auditorium, and throw themselves down to lounge away the summer-like afternoon in gazing, between the elegant ruins, at Etna's vast snow-cloaked shoulders and the sea below. When they stroll back to have tea they will do a little bargaining for spurious antiquities at the theatre gate. If they are staying at one of the more distant hotels they will pause as they pass Crupi's and the antiquity shops by the theatre, or the humble shops in the Corso, where the peasants' pottery is sold at four times its proper price, and register a resolve to come back to shop as soon as they have swallowed their tea, a resolve which our engaged couple kept so well the first night that they were nearly an hour late for dinner. On the morrow and many days following they will do the same, trying to get a coveted piece of majolica or a gemmed belt at their own figure. Very likely they will go away without seeing Mola, or the castle, or any of the palaces; but they will go to the Convent of S. Caterina, because it is no distance, and every boy in Taormina will pester them until they have seen it; and they will

“ALWAYS AFTERNOON”

go and stare at the women spinning in the street near the theatre, and give the begging children money because they bother them. And they will go to the cathedral on Sunday, as a sort of dog-show, and most likely to the Church of England service, which, the last time we were there, was held in a bedroom in the worst hotel. And the people who are staying at the S. Domenico Hotel will “do” the church and the cloisters and the belvedere of S. Domenico, and probably very little else except the theatre. And everyone in the place will moon along in the sun or the shade as suits them best, amusing themselves with merest trifles, and probably kodaking. Miss Heriot took three hundred kodaks at Taormina. And this is not a bad way either of “doing” a place, if you “do” it with the determination of registering every detail in your mind; if you do it with the eyes of your mind open, and not like a boy who blunders along rubbing his hoop-stick against the park-railings to make a noise with the least possible trouble, and kill time somehow. Taormina is, to use the poet’s expression, “a land where it is always afternoon”—a beautiful gift of the gods, where fairy-like views and fairy-like architecture are combined in a lotus-eater’s climate.

CHAPTER III.

A THEATRICAL CASTLE OF INDOLENCE : ALL ABOUT TAORMINA

I SUPPOSE I love basking as much as most people, but I do not feel any imperious necessity to idle while I am basking. If it is very hot I own I would rather drive than walk, so as to revel in the dear sunshine instead of feeling it even a little bit of a burden. But given the opportunity of driving from sight to sight, I would rather go sight-seeing in hot weather, even tropically hot weather, than any other. To saunter along in the sun, stopping to take in any charming bit of scenery or architecture, any quaint detail of the life of the people, in a country which has not had its characteristics trampled out by the feet of tourists is my chief idea of pleasure. Taormina, in spite of its manifold and ineffable beauties, is not the place I would choose, because it is stagey. I cannot accuse the Tauromenians of being, like other inhabitants of favoured spots, cosmopolitanised by tourists. They are guilty of a much more sensational crime. Their life is one long comic opera, in which the stage Italian is crossed with the mythological Greek. During siesta-time one or two actors hold the stage, but after the sun wanes the whole chorus is in the street. They are always rehearsing—a full-dress rehearsal generally, whenever you see them. But as the backgrounds are real and exquisite, I must describe them in detail. Those foolish Tauromenians, if their Municipio, or their County Council or whatever it is, would only put that funicular down to the seashore at Giardini, so that people could go down to the sea easily and sail a boat round to the caves, and so

Photoly Cneph.

ETNA AND THE TOWN OF GIARDINI AND THE STRAIT OF MESSINA



WHAT THERE IS TO SEE

that sturdy sunburnt fishermen might always be passing up! That would just supply the tonic that is needed in this theatrical castle of indolence. Even the engaged couple saw this after the first three days.

WHAT THERE IS TO SEE IN TAORMINA

To describe Taormina in detail I must divide it up into headings, taking first, perhaps, the Corso; then the palaces which are not in the Corso; then the churches; then the oddments, like the Orologio and the Piazza; finishing up with the theatre, which is a very dry affair to describe, for all its wonderfulness; S. Domenico, S. Caterina; and the climb up to the castle and Mola. The Zecca and the Saracen tombs and the Rotondo are on the way to S. Caterina. After which I shall discuss the hotels and anything else which occurs to me.

You enter by the Messina gate. I don't think there is any gate, but there is an arch, and "gate" means arch in Sicily. This is the place where you pay the head of the *octroi* half a franc not to do his duty, and almost directly you have passed it and the quaint little buildings which cluster beside it, you come to a square called, I think, the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, which has a few ragged little trees and is bounded on three sides



THE PALAZZO CORVAIA

IN SICILY

by the Teatro Regina Margherita, the barracks of the *carabinieri*, and the Palazzo Corvaia. Her Majesty's Theatre was once a church, and the details are as faithfully preserved as they could be while complying with theatrical requirements. We saw opera there, as will be related anon. The barracks, which were the conventual buildings

of the theatre-church, and were formerly known as the Badia Nuova — the New Nunnery — contain twenty-two *carabinieri*, who keep the countryside in better order than a regiment of soldiers could, and maintain an officer who goes a long way towards making a *table d'hôte* at the Hotel Victoria, where, when we were staying at Taormina in 1896, he used to dine nightly with the chief priest.



Photo by Crupi.

A WATER CARRIER
AT THE DOORWAY OF THE PALAZZO CORVAIA

of the theatre-church, and were formerly known as the Badia Nuova — the New Nunnery — contain twenty-two *carabinieri*, who keep the countryside in better order than a regiment of soldiers could, and maintain an officer who goes a long way towards making a *table d'hôte* at the Hotel Victoria, where, when we were staying at Taormina in 1896, he used to dine nightly with the chief priest.

It is almost the only good piece of masonry in Taormina, though it is certainly not so striking to the uninitiated eye as the Palazzo S. Stefano, or the Badia, with their bold black-and-white effects.

A fine but ruinous Sicilian-Gothic doorway, which gives a glimpse

THE PALAZZO CORVAIA

The Palazzo Corvais has fallen from its high estate, but serves to show the almost indestructible dignity and beauty of good mediæval archi-

THE PALAZZO CORVAIA

of the famous staircase, admits you to the courtyard, where a pseudo-blind guide tells you with extreme volubility that this is the Palazzo Corvaia, and cannot tell you another thing about it. I say pseudo-blind because of his indignation when I gave him an Argentine penny for trying to stop us going up the staircase and into the interior of the palace. First he protested that the penny was bad, and then that there was nothing—nothing above. We did not heed either protestation, but pursued our way to a large chamber with a fine bowed, oak-coffered roof, which was occupied by a bookbinder. This *legatore* was in himself interesting, but he was so desperately anxious to sell us, first, a large sort of armoire, and, failing that, an ancient bureau and chairs, that he could not suffer himself to impart his knowledge. And the worst of it was that Miss Heriot, whom I was showing over the palace, seriously thought of buying them till I convinced her fiancé, who had a strong practical vein, that he must first go to Messina and make arrangements with a forwarding agency.

The beautiful front of the palace has its upper part tolerably unaltered, though the Sicilian-Gothic windows are most of them more or less built up, and some of the delicate shafts which divide them are missing. But the splendid masonry of the lower story has been broken into *bassi* for shops of the humblest description—the kind of shops which have no stock to speak of, but specimens of what they sell suspended across their fronts on strings,—a potato, a stick of charcoal, some oil in a broken bottle, and perhaps a shrivelled tomato. The cobbler's *basso* interested me most, because the old



Photo by the Author.

THE OLD COMEDY
IN THE BASSO OF THE PALAZZO CORVAIA

IN SICILY

comedy was going on there. The cobbler's comely daughter used to spin in the shop, and his assistant worked leisurely. Witheridge pretended not to see. The other shops were beneath notice, but the old Gothic palace jutting out boldly into the square with its *merluzzi*, as the cloven Arab battlements are called, profiled against the deep Sicilian sky, is really a very striking object. Its courtyard has a noble staircase carried round two of its sides on bold half arches, with a little gallery at the top faced with a curious relief; it is one of the most beautiful and elegant mediæval staircases of Sicily, built of *pietra nera*. On the side towards you, as you enter, you see a bas-relief, of the same stone, divided into three sections, representing three leading Biblical events. The middle compartment represents the original sin with the usual allegorical figure of the serpent coiled round the tree, and Eve gathering the forbidden fruit. That on the right is said to represent the expulsion from the Garden of Eden; that on the left the sacrifice of Abraham. As the Italian guide-book observes, the sculptures seem to belong to a primitive



1895 J. Mancini

THE ADAM AND EVE STAIRCASE IN THE COURTYL OF THE PALAZZO CORVAIA

THE PALAZZO CORVAIA

epoch of art. On the wall of the staircase is the inscription, "*Esto mihi locû refugii.*" Baedeker regards this as an evidence that the Palazzo Corvaia was once a hospital, but the local guide scouts the idea. The exterior of the palace is well preserved, except for the transformation of its ground floor into shops. The palace has three stories; the bottom story is constructed entirely of fine



Photo by C. G. G.

THE LITTLE GREEK THEATRE, TAORMINA

travertine, which preserves its original whiteness, a little yellowed and mellowed by time.

The exterior contains these inscriptions in Byzantine characters: on the south-west side, "*Deum diligere prudentia est—Eum adorari justitia*"; on the front, "*Nullis in adversis ab eo extrahi fortitudo est—Nullis illecebris emoliri temperancia est—Et in his sunt actus virtutum*"; and on the north-east side the following: "*Par domus e coelo sed minori domino.*"

IN SICILY

THE LITTLE GREEK THEATRE

Adjoining the palace is a charming little Renaissance church, dedicated, I think, to S. Agnese, built half over the little Greek theatre at the corner of the Strada Timeo. The theatre has two well-marked *vomitories* (entrances to the various tiers of the auditorium) leading out of the remains of covered passages. There are considerable remains of the stage, with white marble steps. The first four rows of seats are covered with red tiles.

THE CORSO OF TAORMINA

As we passed up the Corso towards the Piazza and the Duomo, many charming mediæval and Renaissance details struck our eyes—here a rose-window in a desecrated church, there a balcony with good ironwork, though not to be compared with the ironwork of Syracuse. Each of these balconies had a spike or two impaling a flower-pot of coarse green glaze, but exquisite shape, with a flood of brilliant red carnations tumbling over its sides. But there was nothing of very much moment till we came to the little Piazza of S. Agostino, which is the centre of native life in Taormina, as the theatre and the street adjoining it form the centre for the *forestieri*. In Sicily foreigners are always called *forestieri*. This piazza is one of the most picturesque bits of the city, for round it rise the old clock tower, supposed to have Greek foundations, the rather striking Renaissance church of S. Giuseppe, the dear little Gothic church of S. Agostino, and the Circolo, the very amusing little club of Taormina; while its lower side is occupied by a set of low railings, topped at intervals with the same queer pots, over which we looked up at Etna and down the precipitous green flank of the mountain stretching to the sea. The tower did not look Greek, though it would shock the inhabitants if you told them so.

THE CLUB OF TAORMINA

THE CIRCOLO, THE CLUB OF TAORMINA

But the club is cheerful and airy, though rather what a Scotchwoman would call "a dry house." If you are staying in any of the hotels, there is no subscription. This is, I suppose, in the hope that you will order something. We were liberally-minded, and had a large party, so we gave the care-taker a penny-halfpenny when we used it. It has nice, lofty rooms, gaily papered and ceiled; has a few pictures, one a Christmas supplement on silk, and a few journals, such as the *Corriere di Sicilia*, the *Tribuna*, and the *Gazzetta di Messina*. The whole rather reminded me of the Club União at Macao. Outside, on the ground, it had an iron gallery, with rods shaped into Gothic arches. We stumbled upon it quite accidentally, by Miss Heriot's taking refuge from a shower of rain. With the assurance of her sex and country, she had simply walked in. In Sicily one does not expect rain, and with a dress such as she had on it was worth while waiting for a carriage, if it had to be fetched from Giardini. She had been to church.



THE CLUB OF TAORMINA, WITH TYPICAL SICILIAN CART
AND HARNESS

IN SICILY

CHURCH PARADE AT TAORMINA

It was Sunday morning after church, and the Piazza was full of Sicilians in their Sabbath raiment, which is, for the female part at any rate, of the rainbow order. But they did not take the smallest notice of the weeping skies. The police band played on grimly, and remarkably well for a village, at the *Geisha*, which had just reached Taormina.



[Photo by]

[The Author.]

WOMEN IN WHITE SHAWLS AND KERCHIEFS
WITH GAY PAISLEY BORDERS

The panniered asses waited with a philosophical calm characteristic of Sicilian beasts of burden, especially cab horses; cabs drive slower in Sicily than anywhere under the sun. The men in their short Sicilian jackets and breeches of the brightest blue, the women in their white shawls and kerchiefs with gay Paisley borders, and charming children, just stood and gaped at the music. A woman in the bright green confined to persons of the name of Anna was thrown into doubly strong relief by

the dark arch of the Orologio. She was, I think, a little timid of rain. Some actors, who were naturally the finest of all, were improving the occasion by at once taking the air under the admiring gaze of the public, and trying to sell tickets for a benefit. Opera had come to Taormina.

And, in the midst of all, nearly knocking over a bandsman's stand, was an old blind beggar pointing to the skies.

The priests were there from the cathedral, nodding approvingly at everything, including the music of the *Geisha* and a gambling-table

THE PIAZZA OF S. AGOSTINO

with *petits chevaux*, which was leaning right against the steps of S. Giuseppe. They saw no harm, apparently, in the gambling, though they would, I have no doubt, have preferred to trust their money to the lottery.* Taormina, like every other Italian town, has its lottery office. If there are only two places in the town that an Italian can direct you to, the one is sure to be the lottery office, and the other the post office. When the Sicilian has nothing else to do he registers a letter. If the British Post Office did a corresponding business in registration, Mr. Henniker-Heaton might demand a farthing imperial postage.

Presently the rain-clouds parted, and the bright Sicilian blue shone through, and the whole scene assumed the appearance of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Fortunately we had not sent for a carriage—because the carriages from the morning train would be passing almost immediately, and we could tell them to pick Miss Heriot up when they had discharged their passengers. So we stepped out into the street.

A little boy, who had been watching for the rain to stop, at once attacked me with, "Are you going to Mola, signor?" Knowing that he would volunteer his services as a guide, next, I said, "No; Messina." With superb sarcasm he smiled and said, "Bon viaggio, signor."

The Piazza is apparently officially designated *Largo Nove Aprile*.

THE CHURCH OF S. AGOSTINO AND THE NEW SAINTS

Other would-be guides were not so finely bred, so we took refuge in S. Agostino, a dear little church with a simple but elegant Gothic exterior. The inside was not so satisfactory, though it had ancient red marble columns with Greek capitals, and a fair, wooden roof resting on fourteenth-century corbels. The sacristan's duties, as is often the case in Sicily, fell to a woman, though a man, probably, drew the pay. She wore a green dress, a yellow handkerchief, a red

* The most recent adequate account of the Italian State lottery is to be found in *In Tuscany*, by Montgomery Carmichael. (John Murray, 1901.)

IN SICILY

shawl, and a blue spotted apron. Perugino could have done no more for one of his heroines, but they did not look glaring or incongruous, and in any case they would have been thrown into the shade by the images of S. Cosmo and S. Damian, which had just arrived from Naples in large lemon boxes. They were not great as works of art.

Judged from this point of view, the Highlander which used to stand outside the tobacconist's shop in Knightsbridge, before the days of Humphreys, was finer, but the lady in the Perugino colours was justly proud of them, and we agreed with her, and foresaw that the stock of wax legs, wax stomachs, wax knee-caps, and wax sore eyes, which ornament this church in grateful memory of cures wrought on believers, would be much increased.

My wife had in the interval been to church in the English chaplain's apartments, and put a bank-note for ninepence in the plate. Ninepence may be taken as the current value of the Italian franc in 1898. We others had been to the cathedral, where the service, in spite of its humours, had been most impressive.

THE TWO HALVES OF TAORMINA

Just where the tower of the Orologio stands, Taormina is divided against itself by a tall, thin, Moorish-looking wall which comes down from the castle. Evidently we lived in the least-considered half of the town, for the quaint, outside staircase which admits to the tower is in the other half. But beyond the fact that the cathedral and the Fountain of the Four Beasts, and the Prefettura, or Pretoria, or whatever they call the palace of justice in Taormina, are situated in the part of the town which looks towards Catania, there is no reason why it should be guarded more particularly than the part which faces Messina, which has the honour of containing besides our hotel (an after-thought), at least five churches. Palaces, like the Corvaia, S. Stephano, and the Badia, do not count. They can look after themselves. But palaces are certainly more numerous in the Catania half.

THE PALAZZO SYROI

THE SIGHTS BETWEEN THE OROLOGIO AND THE INFANT SCHOOL

The first object we noticed, when we were through the tower arch, was the Hotel Belvedere, which has a little esplanade jutting out over the precipice, and commanding wonderful views, though I am not sure that anything interested me more

than the back of the old tower, with its tall Gothic arch, winding outside-stair, and its cleft crown supporting the two great bells which once rang out the tocsin when the sails of a corsair or the gleam of spears were seen. As we walked up the street towards the cathedral we saw on our right a couple of Gothic doorways, joined together but of different styles, one of them of noble grace and simplicity; and a little above that, on our left, the fine Renaissance façade of the Syroi Palace (I am sure that this is not the way to spell it, but Don Pan-

crazio, who was my informant, was sure that it was). That palace, too, has one of the graceful Gothic doorways, with a twin shaft carried right round the arch, so characteristic of Taormina and Syracuse. It has, moreover, a feature much commoner at Syracuse—a splendid Spanish balcony, supported on heavy carved stone brackets and made of fine beaten ironwork, bulging out like the bows of one of Nelson's wooden battleships, ornamented at each

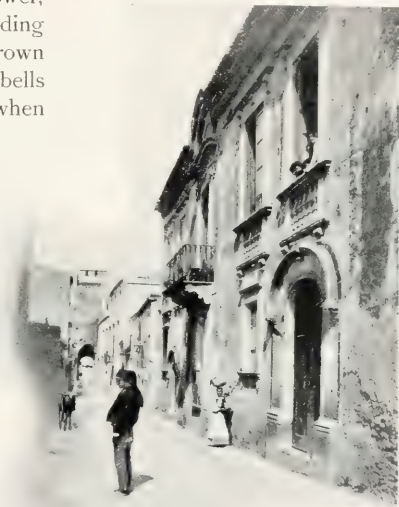


Photo by G. G. G.

THE PALAZZO SYROI AND THE TOWER OF THE OROLOGIO

IN SICILY

corner with a rich flamboyant iron rose, a foot or more across, forged by some smith who was more artist than artisan.

A TAORMINA KINDERGARTEN

Almost next door to the Palazzo Syroi is a tiny infants' school. We looked into it one day when we were passing it in 1896. The pretty young girl of about eighteen who was in charge of it nodded pleasantly. She had fourteen such little tinies to take care of. Some had bright handkerchiefs tied round their heads and under their

chins in the Sicilian fashion, some were bare-headed. All were eating, and one or two were quite fair, with English blue eyes. There was a long table, and because a chair each was more than such little sitters required, a long board was laid upon a number of chairs, and they were packed on it like spitted larks, all very clean and very happy. They were very roguish, some of them, too, but this was disarmed by the sympathy of their girl teacher, who took it as a joke. Half of them were learning to knit stockings, when they had not arrived at the dignity of wearing socks. We were very much struck at the size



Photo by Marjani.

KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN AFTER HOURS

THESE GOTHIC DOORWAYS, JOINED TOGETHER, BUT OF DIFFERENT STYLES

THE KINDERGARTEN

of the things which at that particular moment was being taught to knit. The other half were sewing. Truly, though Sicily is not great on schools, it has arrived at the secret of keeping children quiet, and making them learn something. Any passer-by could look in, for the school was in a *basso*, and as *bassi* have no windows, the doors have to be kept open. The room was very much like an English cottage kitchen, except that it had an image of S. Joseph, near the carpenters' tools on the wall.

When we passed the school two years later the same girl was teaching, and gave us the same little pleasant nod. And one could have sworn that the same children were being taught, though of course the children we saw then were two years too young for it to be possible. This time we went in. Miss Heriot adored little children. The schoolmistress could only speak Sicilian, and the children were hardly old enough to speak at all. But women like them can carry on a conversation for half an hour with looks and smiles, when there are babies to sympathise over.



Photo (y)

[Marchiani]

THE MISTRESS OF THE KINDERGARTEN

FROM THE KINDERGARTEN TO THE PORTA TOCA

The principal remaining objects of interest in the Corso are the Duomo, the adjoining Fountain of the Four Beasts, the outer (Toca) gate, and the little church of S. Antonio.

IN SICILY

THE DUOMO

I do not know if Taormina is the seat of a bishopric, or not, because in Sicily they apply the term *duomo* indifferently, but Murray speaks of the *duomo* here as a cathedral, so I suppose it has a bishop—bless it! It is a mixture of Gothic and Renaissance architecture, and, like most other buildings in Taormina, of uncertain age. It has a very beautiful doorway, in the Sicilian-Gothic style, on the north side, but somehow or other, though its exterior is so much more beautiful than its interior, it is always of its interior that I think. For inside this *duomo*, the Tauromenian forgets the lifelong comic opera in which he is acting, and resolves into a pious country Sicilian. I remember especially a Palm Sunday service that we attended there in 1896. The Sunday of the Palms is the beginning of the long Sicilian summer. Outside, there was a brisk business in plaited palms and rush crosses which were, as often as not, brightened up with a daisy or dandelion; the latter are as common and as humble as they are in England. When we lifted the heavy padded leather curtain and stepped into the *duomo*, our eyes first fell on a handful of boys with palm crosses, and one with a candle, and two with censers, who were waiting to head a procession.

MEN AND WOMEN SEPARATED

The whole church was packed with men and women, dividing themselves rigidly, although there is apparently no regulation on the subject. You do not see it in Palermo, and no one made any objection to Miss Heriot standing by her fiancé and myself. The women, with their fine splashes of red, yellow, and green, favoured the north aisle; the men were standing in the nave, and all of them in rusty black, except old-fashioned old fellows from the country districts, to whom one was tempted to apply the term *heathen* in its original sense. They wore the bright, butchers' blue jackets and breeches, the stockings without soles, and the raw hide sandals tipping over their toes and laced up their legs, which formed the peasants' dress of the old régime. The sandals had the hair left

A PALM SUNDAY SERMON

on them. They reminded you of the supers at the Lyceum, who are on the stage when it is going to be a very dull scene. The men crowded round the pulpit with faces upturned in rapt devotion when the sermon began.

A PALM SUNDAY SERMON

The priest was a great character, with his fat and eloquent face. He wore his black satin pumpkin hat as he ascended the pulpit. Arrived at the top, he took it off, prayed, replaced it, took it off again, bowed to his audience, addressing them as Signore, though there was nothing above a barber in the cathedral, cleared his throat, spat into the nave, and began his sermon. Being in Sicilian, it was unintelligible to us; we could only note with admiration the vigorous way in which he rang the changes from grave to gay, from humour to invective. He was clearly a most popular preacher, for as he preached the audience flowed in like a flood-tide till the *mise en scène* was worthy of the brush of the greatest painter that ever lived. Lovely groups of women, with their strong, handsome, Holy-Family features thrown into relief by the brilliant hues of their shawls and headkerchiefs, sat about on the very steps of the altar.



OLD SICILIANS IN NATIVE DRESS

IN SICILY

The conscript fathers of Taormina sat in their wonderful crescent-shaped marble tribunal under the groggy eagle put up by one of the conquerors, with beggars crowding into their august precincts. The sun-burned, raptured faces of the black-suited men in the nave, after a quarter of an hour's spiritual communion with the preacher, would turn round to spit on the floor. The very little children cried and played. One little boy was inside the rails of the high altar itself, and another had his hat on, while the bigger boys were floating palm crosses as boats in the holy-water stoups—boys will be boys. The priest had carried his palm cross with him to the pulpit. Between the gay headkerchiefs and the black coats were a few people of the better class, men in light suits and yellow boots, and women in the black silk *manto*, the kind of domino which has been *de rigueur* for church from time immemorial in Sicily.

THE BANNER OF ABRAHAM

On the right side of the choir was a marvellous banner, very ancient, representing the three men Abraham saw when the fourth appeared among them. He was shining, with red and blue Bible clothes, and a halo; the other three, being only angels, were in black trousers, Noah's-ark ulsters, and sailor hats. In the aisle beside it was a fifteenth-century Madonna, with a good deal of pathos and feeling about her image.

THE INTERIOR OF THE DUOMO

I was charmed with the interior of this *duomo*, because everything wore the appearance of the rest of ages. There was not a perpendicular line in the church, from the old, white-and-gold tumbly-down organ-lofts—one a sham—to the great red seat at the altar-foot for the *patres urbis* (as the inscription informed us), the aldermen or senators of Taormina, which had such a comical coat-of-arms above. Their eagle looked positively drunk—it was so out of the perpendicular; and the pulpit looked so groggy that every time the priest warmed to his subject you expected him to

SERVICE IN THE DUOMO

bring it down on the top of the dog which sat looking up at him with the same rapt expression as the rest of the congregation. The dog probably had the same belief, but in a more concrete form, that he had to look to the priest for his daily bread. There seems to be no unreasonable prejudice against dogs in Sicilian churches. I have often seen ladies take lap-dogs under their arms into the cathedral at Palermo to the most impressive services.

There were purple bags on the crosses against the antique marble columns, in deference to Lent, and I noticed that the children, who were too poor to afford palm-leaf crosses at a halfpenny each, carried the catkins which half the children in England devoutly believe to be palms. Palms are scarce round Taormina.

Sight-seeing was not possible on that Sunday of the Palms, even had we desired it. The cathedral was like an ant-heap. We went in another day to examine that grand red marble throne, twelve feet long by six feet high, with four tiers of steps, upon which the *patres urbis* had sat with their feet, as it were, on the necks of beggars; to take in the grace of the queer, perishing Renaissance arches under the perishing gold and white seventeenth-century organs, the real and the sham; and to take another look at the two mediæval iron lions trying to climb up the font; the fish-globe candlesticks; and the tinselly toy-shop reflectors to the lights on the small altars. Mr. Witheridge did not accompany us on that occasion. He had had enough of the cathedral, even while there were dogs and children to woo his coy attention. He saw nothing picturesque in the Roman Catholic ceremonial. It was all tomfoolery to him.

THE FOUNTAIN OF THE FOUR BEASTS

After the Piazza of S. Agostino, the Fountain of the Four Beasts is the principal centre of life in Taormina. Of this fountain Murray is content to say that "it is an octagonal fountain with two basins resting on boys and monsters." It is crowned with a highly ridiculous mermaid, and rests on a platform of sweeping steps, at each corner of which is a column with a basin hanging from its side and a

IN SICILY

grotesque beast on its top. The water now gushes from only one of them, a kind of sea-horse, and this is the most popular of all the fountains in Taormina. Here, at any hour of the day, you may see

women, old or young, with huge pitchers balanced on their heads in fearless poise, waiting to take their turn. The fountains are the women's clubs; the younger ones are often bare-headed and bare-footed, and probably have precious little on them under their dresses, but their skirts always reach to their ankles and their bodices to their necks. It is not only the women who wait patiently for the coveted water; there are usually two or three asses with as much in their panniers as an ordinary cart would hold, and always *finocchio* (fennel) waiting to be washed. The architecture is really nothing remarkable; the figures of man and beast



THE FOUNTAIN OF THE FOUR BEASTS

Photo. by Corp.

are grotesque; the date is uncertain; and yet this quaint old fountain, with its groups of waiting women and beasts, standing in such a picturesque position, is distinctly one of the most memorable bits in Taormina. It was the scene of most of Miss Heriot's photographs.

CHEMISTS' SHOPS AS CLUBS

Almost opposite the Duomo is the principal *pharmacia*. The chemists' shops in a Sicilian country town form a sort of club for

SENDING A TELEGRAM

the better class people, just as the numerous barbers' saloons are used as clubs by the common people. The minor gaming hells, where the ball rolling down the column is more popular than the *petits chevaux* (and business in both is so slack that the proprietor rings a bell whenever he sees anyone passing), cannot compare in popularity with the establishments of Æsculapius and Figaro. There are two pharmacies in Taormina, and the priests, who are the principal inhabitants, divide themselves between them pretty evenly. As soon as the morning service is over, the priests go and sit there for the rest of the Sunday in a sort of semicircle, and, when you go to buy a pennyworth of anything, almost the whole club assist in trying to make you and the proprietor understand each other. Antipyrin, sold in separate packets, was the latest novelty in Taormina; the name was easily Italianised into antipyrhina, and had the advantage of expressing something to the Italian mind. Whenever Mr. Witheridge had nothing better to do he went and bought a packet of antipyrin. They are a handy thing to have in your portmanteau—an unfailing introduction to any lady stranger who is suffering from a headache. In other respects, neither of the Taormina pharmacies shows amazing enterprise—I tried in vain to procure bichlorate of potash tablets when I had a sore throat—but one is more influential than the other because its proprietor runs the telegraph office of Taormina.

SENDING A TELEGRAM IN SICILY

Sending a telegram in Sicily is almost as amusing as sending a packet by parcel post, though you cannot have so much of the authorities' time over it. With good luck it may take you as long as registering a letter, though this could only happen when the post office is empty, and that is hardly ever the case. If there are only twenty people in a Sicilian village, one will keep the post office and the other nineteen will spend most of their time in using it. It is not that they are very great at writing letters. I suppose the majority of poor Sicilians cannot write a letter, but when they

IN SICILY

have got a letter written for them by the professional letter-writer, they cannot trust the treasure by ordinary post; they feel bound to register it, and spend half a morning or afternoon in doing so. The poor have plenty of time in Sicily; there is never enough work to go all round.

I sent a telegram from this pharmacy once on a Sunday. It was to Rome. The telegraphist could not pretend that there was no such place as the place I wanted to send it to. But he had another chance. I wrote a word too many for a franc telegram, and, as it was not important, scratched it out. He began a long palaver in Sicilian, and several of the priests interpreted at the same time. It was only to get me to initial the scratched-out word, because, if I did not, the telegraphist would be punished for leaving out a word and pocketing the proceeds. No man trusts even himself in Sicily.

THE POST OFFICE OF TAORMINA

At the other side of the Piazza, a little below the cathedral, was the post office, where I have spent many an hour despatching parcels. There is a very convenient parcel post from Sicily to England by which you can send five kilos (about eleven pounds) for two francs fifty, rather less than two shillings. We used it a great deal for sending pottery home. But there are all sorts of formalities to be gone through. The package must be effusively sealed, and it is not safe to run it within a pound of the limit, or you will very likely have to undo it and take something out and seal it up again in the post office. You have to fill up no less than four forms for the postal and customs authorities as to its weight, and nature of contents, destination, and so on; and if you venture to attach any value to it you have to pay twopence-halfpenny extra and put your seal on each paper. You will very likely have to wait an hour before you will get anyone to attend to you, because there are two or three others before you, one of whom will be sending a round basket to a soldier, and another not able to write, which is always welcome, as it gives the bystanders a chance of taking part. The postmaster of Taormina was most obliging. He

POST OFFICE VAGARIES

always let me use the office string and sealing-wax, and once he even let Miss Heriot use the office brown paper. He was also highly ingenious. Not the least of the trials to which the English traveller in Sicily is exposed is the fact that you can send four ounces for one penny in an inland letter in England, but only half an ounce for twopence-halfpenny in a letter going abroad. The consequence is that if a friend has sent his full value for his penny to the post office abroad, you are penalised two francs. I had to pay three francs fifty-five for a fine-looking envelope to that same postmaster at Taormina, and, when I opened it in the railway station at Catania, all it contained was a French newspaper with a review of one of Mr. George Moore's books.

POST OFFICE VAGARIES

I have mentioned that this postmaster was very ingenious. Wishing to postpone my pain in paying the *segnatasse*—tax for shortage—on a whole lot of letters that I might not care twopence about, as long as possible, he hit upon the brilliant idea of keeping them all till the end of my stay, when he presented me with about a pound's worth, as I was on my way down to catch the train for Catania. The result was that I read them in the train, where I had no writing materials to answer them with, and as I never remember to answer a letter unless I do it by return of post, they are unanswered to this day. I have only come across one postmaster of similar ingenuity in my travels, and that was at Sydney, in New South Wales. My brother wrote from England to tell me that he was going to be married, and that he was sending me by book post a photograph of the happy lady. Only the cover of the package came; the photograph had dropped out in the mail bag. I wrote to the postmaster enclosing the covers, per R.M.S. *Orient*, requesting that if any photograph had been found loose in the mail bags it should be forwarded to me. The answer came that they did not keep any account of what mail the loose articles found in the bags came by, but that they had more than two hundred unclaimed photographs in the post office, and that if I called at such and such a time I could take my choice. I had never seen my proposed sister-in-law.

IN SICILY

THE CIAMPOLI PALACE AND BITS IN THE BY-STREETS

Many people miss the Ciampoli Palace, though every stranger who ever goes to Taormina comes away with a photograph of the beautiful ruined arcade on the upper floor of its wing, which is not to be com-



Photo by Miss Gani.

THE RUINED ARCADE OF THE PALAZZO CIAMPOLI

pared in real architectural beauty either to the façade of the palace with its braid of the Sicilian emblem, or the gateway leading from the wing to the main front. When I pointed this out to Miss Heriot she was incredulous, until I added that these better features had never been taken by either of the Taormina photographers. This awoke the professional instinct in her. She took two or three dozen photographs, and talked with æsthetical assurance of my discovery.

The palace is approached from the street by a sweeping flight of steps, almost as broad as the façade, overhung on one side by

one of the elegant stone balconies which are such an ornament to Taormina. In its upper story it has delicate Sicilian-Gothic windows, but it has now fallen sadly from its ancient state, and is chiefly interesting to students of architecture, for with the exception of the balcony just mentioned, and the upper-story arcade of its wing, it is not so boldly picturesque for the artistic tourist as many a little bit not to be

NARROW STREETS

compared to it for architectural merit. Those bits with their softly-leaning eaves, their poor little iron balconies perched on heavy stone brackets, decorated with, perhaps, a rusty rose of iron, perhaps a common flower-pot with its splashy dark green glaze almost hidden in a shower of rich carnations, or perhaps with a vine that reminds one of a faithful retainer, are to be found in the little by-streets below the Corso, near the Palazzo S. Stefano, or in the little group of buildings just inside the Messina Gate.

One of the special charms about Taormina lies in the number of streets only about half a dozen feet wide, spanned by arches, which climb up or down hill from the Corso. They often have overhanging balconies supported by heavy stone corbels or brackets. There are not many prettier sights than to see one of these *salite* half in the sun, half in the shade, with two or three gaily kerchiefed women coming up or down. When, after heavy rain, they become regular rivers, the women in the neighbouring houses do their washing in them. It is less trouble than going to the nearest fountain. These ladies will banter with you if you have sufficient Sicilian.



Photo by Mariani.

SIDE GATEWAY AND FAÇADE OF THE CIAMPOLI PALACE

IN SICILY

SICILIAN GOATS

The Corso ends with the round-arched Catania Gate. There is another gate only a very few yards beyond it, the beautiful Porta Toca, described on page 122, and between them is the pretty little church of

S. Antonio, which has a nice Gothic doorway. The path which takes you up to the mountain from the Catania Gate, takes you past the Englishman's villa (page 122), and soon degenerates into a paved and filthy goat-track, which is, however, worth visiting when the goats come down to be milked, by all who take a morbid pleasure in noticing human traits in horrid animals. Goats have such a Semitic leer, and whatever their sex or age, they all look like old men. Down they come, not like sheep in a dumb driven mob, or an emptying sack of potatoes, but displaying their individuality by polishing their ribs against the walls, or



Photo by Max.ianti.

A SIDE STREET IN TAORMINA

raking over a whole dust-heap with a stroke of a horn, that takes them no longer than it takes you to write your signature, or standing on their hind legs looking into a window, or jumping on a wall, or making a wanton attack on a dog, or standing up on a milestone to take a view of the world, but always with an eye to the main chance

THE SICILIAN KID

—such a wicked eye, that if a money-lender had it he would be in danger of starving, because no one would dare to borrow money from him.

You wonder that they have not learnt to drink their own milk to cheat their owners, or, for the matter of that, you could almost suspect them of selling it, and getting the right change too, and spending it on their favourite vice, though the only vices goats could care about, which they do not indulge in already, without having to pay for them, are tobacco chewing and taking opium. Just think how goats with their nasty minds would revel in the opium habit! How I can picture a goat with an apostolic beard and an air of Celestial content stretched upon his back like a playing puppy!

I suggested this to Mr. Witheridge, who took an interest in goats, and had explored Chinatown, San Francisco, with a detective. He went straight to the pharmacy and laid in a stock of opium. Warned by me, Miss Heriot threatened to break off their engagement if he tried it on the goats which supplied our own hotel. For it is all very well making fun of goats, but one could not do without them in Sicily, for their milk, when it is freshly drawn, is first-rate, though it gets goaty after it has stood for an hour. And it is only in the very large towns that you can get any milk but goat's milk, and even goat's milk is hard to procure, for this very reason I suppose, except just after the morning and evening milking-time.

THE SICILIAN KID

But I do hate goats, after all, because they have kids; and though a little white Sicilian kid is pretty enough for anything while it is alive, it is a disgusting object when it is being skinned before you in the shop windows where you go to buy a delicate cream cheese wrapped up in fresh green rushes, and it is a still more disgusting object when it is put before you to eat. You ask the waiter what it is. He will very likely tell you it is *agnello* (lamb), and if he acknowledges that it is *capretta* (little goat), he will add that it is all the same as lamb. But it is not all the same as lamb, or anything else, but fiddle-strings. It does not taste bad, but you want a mincing machine

IN SICILY

instead of teeth. Even a roast hare does not look so like a cat as a kid. As Mr. Witheridge said, some animals when they are exposed for food look as if they had been killed, and others look as if they had been murdered.

THE PALAZZO SAN STEFANO

You have to dart down from the Corso near the Catania Gate to reach the Palazzo S. Stefano, the third of the notable palaces of Taormina. You are only allowed to see the exterior—which you can



Photo by Marziani

THE PALAZZO S. STEFANO AND TAORMINA'S PALM TREE

see without the leave of the poor Italian prince who lives there, as immured as if he were in a convent; the garden, which is a waste, with giant mallows and a small well; and the basement which contains what is called a Saracen bath, I do not know on what authority. It has a boiler pan and a piped aqueduct certainly, the latter running round two sides of the chamber to a sort of disused grave at the side of the door. It is a fine mediæval chamber with a column in the centre supporting a vault of four bays; but it is not much better kept than the garden, which is the abomination of desolation.

THE BADIA

Even Miss Heriot, with her American eloquence and elegance, and her Parisian frocks, could never force her way into that house, I presume lest there should be an outcry for the restoration of the marbles despoiled from the Roman theatre, with which it was garnished by a former duke. It is strikingly beautiful outside, with its braided machicolations of black lava and white marble, and its cloven Arab battlements; with its glorious heavy-traceried windows of Sicilian-Gothic in its upper story, and its pairs of loopholes divided by a slender shaft in its lower story, to which access is given by a broad terraced stairway rising very gently, and flanked by an imposing stone parapet. All the windows, which are of white marble, are outlined with lava, and, after the Badia, it is the most striking mediæval building in Taormina.

THE BADIA

Mola is under Monte Venere, and the castle is under Mola, and the Badia is under the castle, and Taormina is under the Badia. The Badia, or the Badia Vecchia, to give it its full title, the ancient convent of Taormina, has a beauty hardly to be matched except in Eastern lands. Its beauty of outline and position is absolute; it stands, as I have said, on a spur of the mountain, with a back-



Photo by Marziani.

THE BADIA VECCHIA (ANCIENT CONVENT)
SURROUNDED BY A THICKLY-LAKED TERRACE

IN SICILY

ground of prickly-pear thicket and brown crag. The fact that it is a mere shell, whose very use can hardly be ascertained, is nothing. There it stands like a broad tower, with its façade pierced at its head by a triplet of vast Gothic windows unsurpassed in grace. Their arches, the masses of clustered columns from which they spring, and the grandly bold tracery with which they are still partly filled, are of pure white marble, and make a belt of glittering white right across the façade. The spandrels between the arches are filled in with chequer work of black lava and white marble, and below the windows there is an exquisite tessellated band of the same materials. The Badia, or the Badiazza, is now unfortunately private property, and one is no longer permitted to grope among the nettles with which it is floored. This is rather an unnecessary piece of churlishness on behalf of the owner, whose new villa, adjoining it, looks like a bathing establishment, horribly out of keeping with this most poetical monument of the Sicilian-Gothic architecture. The poor Italian prince who lives in the Palazzo S. Stefano closes that also against the public, with the exception of his weedy backyard of a garden and the Saracen bath in the basement. The convent of S. Domenico is turned into a hotel. If this kind of thing goes on nobody will go to Taormina soon.

For it is a great temptation to stop short at Capri, which is even more beautiful and more easily accessible.

THE HOTEL CONVENT OF S. DOMENICO

S. Domenico is a few steps below the Palazzo S. Stefano. When I first remember it, it was an almost deserted convent occupied by its last nun, and a German baron, who was often spoken of by the natives as English because he could talk English. I do not know whether he is still the proprietor. The proprietor is certainly a person of rank, who runs the place himself as a hotel with a manager as the nominal figure-head. Its large cloister, with a Renaissance well in the centre, against which the best-looking youths of Taormina are photographed, naked except for a laurel wreath,

HOTEL S. DOMENICO

to be sold as Greeks, is still grass-green ; nor are the second or third cloisters much altered. And those often-quoted relics of the English occupation, the words *Barrack-master's store, No. 2*, scribbled on a wall, are happily not yet whitewashed. The well in the great cloister has an ironwork crown, which the guide in the old days used to call a love-crown, probably without reference to the last survivor of the nuns, who kept behind her grated window, and seems to have escaped the slightest breath of scandal from the proximity of the baron. The guide used to stamp to make an echo ; possibly (though I do not remember) he told us that the whole space underneath it was a vast cistern ; it is usual to tell you this in Sicilian cloisters. The thing I remember best about S. Domenico is that Miss Heriot, sunny Miss Heriot, was cross, cross with herself for not having made her parents go to such a sentimental hotel, and cross that she had not been able to visit S. Domenico in its still more sentimental days, when it was a convent occupied by a baron and a nun barred off from each other. By this time she had got into the habit of accompanying us on most of our sight-seeing expeditions. She brought her fiancé whenever he would come.

The convent's situation, on a sort of promontory overhanging



Photo's Comp.

THE CLOISTER AT THE HOTEL S. DOMENICO

IN SICILY

Giardini, is superb, and one of its *loggie* has the finest view of Etna, and the other has the finest view of the great theatre. And it has the usual Sicilian convent *pergola*—a walk between tall white plaster columns carrying an arbour of vines. If the proprietor has put in hot-water pipes I think he has done the most for it in the way of a hotel, but I am not sure that he will be able to attract the class of customers he wishes. Converted convents always seem to me more



Photogr. Coupr.

THE HOTEL CONVENT OF S. DOMENICO, WITH ETNA BEHIND IT

suited for pensions than hotels, unless these hotels mean to go in for a pension business. For a *pension* the numerous cells are calculated to make it profitable—a great many people can be accommodated in a small space. But people who go to expensive hotels like large airy rooms with fireplaces in them; they do not want to sleep in cells. That appeals to the æsthetic mind which does not usually go with a full purse, or to the great. A really great man usually sleeps in the smallest room of his house, and is born—like Lord Kitchener—in several places.

But the situation is so fine, the *loggie* are so unequalled in airiness

THE CASTLE OF TAORMINA

and elegance combined with marvellous views, that people will put up with a good deal, especially as the bedrooms have the right aspect. Hot-water pipes are indispensable for keeping that great chilled building habitable at the time of the year when the foreigners are most there. And this hotel must rely almost entirely on foreign patronage. But it is very nicely carpeted, and is fairly well furnished for a mountain town, though as Taormina is so near Messina and Catania, there is no reason why it should not get any furniture it requires.

The church is, of course, not affected by the convent being turned into a hotel. It has very fine panelling.

THE CASTLE OF TAORMINA

The favourite walk out of Taormina is that which takes you to the castle, and Mola, and Monte Venere, when you get there. Very few people do get to Monte Venere. A climb, even a good steep climb, is all very well when it is all climbing up or climbing down; but when you have first a sharp climb up, and then a sharp climb down, you generally leave off at the top of the second up. To get to the castle you go out of the Messina Gate, as you do for Monte Zirreto, but you keep up to the left all the way, up a very stony and not very interesting path, until you get to the foot of the castle rock itself, though there are occasionally charming bits of cornfields and orchards, gay at the season of the year, with anemones, and irises, and grape-hyacinths. The climb up to the castle rock itself is by short, steep stairways, and there is little to see when you get there, except the view. The castle of Taormina looks as if it had been built by the people, without a regular architect, when they were desperately frightened by a sudden threat of invasion. Its architecture is as uncertain as its date, and you can say no more of it than that, seen at a due distance, it has an exceedingly picturesque effect and the generally "Saracen" appearance, which can be imparted to almost any blank wall of rough brown stone topped with cloven Saracen battlements. It consists

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of a large outer court and a little keep which contains the well indispensable to a fortress, a grassed-over tower, and a battlemented walk supported by a number of pointed arches. The little court which has this walk running along it was, I suppose, the hall of the castle, or something of the kind. From it a flat-headed doorway leads into what may have been a dungeon or a wine-cellar, about ten feet long, four feet wide, and six feet high. Rather a good little pointed arch leads from the hall into the large porch, full, on March 14th, 1898, of spurge, marigolds, orpine, bugloss, daisies, mallows, and cranes'-bills. In the great outer court there is simply no trace of anything; it might have been a sheepfold, with a high wall to keep out beasts of prey; but on the grassy top of the tower there is the usual splendid view from the Straits of Messina to Cape Santa Croce, a little short of Syracuse. I imagine that if one lived at Taormina, one would have a garden enclosed in very high walls, where one could sit when one wanted to get away from views for a rest.

THE WOMAN CARRYING FENNEL TO THE HERMITAGE

The promontory, which was Naxos, lies more than ever at your feet here. As we went down from the castle to climb again to Mola we met, I remember, a very handsome woman, carrying on her scarlet head-dress an orderly pile of cut fennel, showing alternate green and white, arranged like, and about the size of, a wood-stack. I wondered where on earth she was taking it to, for the only building near the castle is the highly picturesque and highly deserted hermitage, perched on a tremendous precipice of yellow limestone, which looks a more difficult place to storm than the castle itself. I suppose someone lives there, though it is always hermetically sealed.

THE TRIP TO MOLA.

To get from the castle to Mola you have to go down a little, and then to climb sharply up a series of steep zigzags between cultivated terraces. Mola, which I have elsewhere compared to

A TRIP TO MOLA

a mural crown hung on a crag, is one of the walled villages you find on mountain-tops in Sicily, with a parish church of some pretensions, a ruined castle, an inn, which is said to be filthy and extortionate, and a sort of human pig-sty of quite unpicturesque houses, seething with dirty and not very agreeable people. The ruined castle, which you pay about twopence to go in, after you have spent half an hour in finding the *custode*, is a place you can walk round in five minutes, but has the usual wealth of over-growth and wild flowers, and more than the usual wealth of views, because you can look inland, from which, at Taormina, you are blocked by this very rock of Mola. But the finest view at Mola is the view of itself, just before you get up to it, when you catch your first sight of the tall and splendid gateway of 1578, which is the only means of admission to the town. And long before you reach this you have magnificent

glimpses of the embattled wall crowning the dark precipices. This, without the eternal views to Messina and Syracuse, neither of which cities you can see, repays the labour of the ascent, of which the natives think so little that they send their children to school at Taormina instead of having a school of their own. And they themselves seem to do all their shopping in Taormina, which impresses me more, for in



THE PATH UP TO THE CASTLE
TRICKLY-LEAKS

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country places they expect so much of children. In one of "Q's" books, for instance, when the Band of Hope Temperance Society was making an effort for the conversion of a little Cornish town, the inhabitants tried it on boys under fourteen first. If you want to go from Mola, which is only 2,080 feet above the sea and 1,600 and odd feet above Taormina, to Monte Venere, which is another 1,000 feet above the sea, you have to go down again a good bit before you begin the fresh ascent. We did not go to Monte Venere, but commenced at once the unwelcome task of jerking our insides as we stumped down the steep and stony path to Taormina.

HOW DIONYSIUS FARED AT MOLA

At any rate we got down more comfortably than Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, the mighty conqueror. He seems to have been of an adventurous disposition, and one winter's night, when the snow lay thick on the ground, climbed up to Mola and disposed of the Siculan garrison, I suppose in the usual way. Encouraged by this, he attempted to dash down into Taormina, and actually effected an entrance; but the citizens made a desperate effort, and drove him out helter-skelter, and the local legend is that he rolled all the way down from Taormina to Giardini, a matter of 385 feet, and that he was wounded to boot. It would have been more surprising if he had not been.

CHAPTER IV.

A SICILIAN INN: THE HOTEL VICTORIA AT TAORMINA

WHAT WE HAD TO EAT AT THE HOTEL VICTORIA

WE have stayed twice at the Hotel Victoria at Taormina, and enjoyed it immensely each time, but let no one venture to enter its hospitable portals who is not a Bohemian at heart. For there are certain little drawbacks which Bohemians forgive, and those who will not forgive them might go away and condemn a place which is a delight to all good Bohemians. You pay seven or six francs a day, according to your stay—I daresay even five for a lengthened stay, and you live on the fat of the land. I never was in a place so flowing with milk, though you had to buy honey for yourself if you wanted it, and you always did want honey, for, getting up so early as you do, and tramping about so much, you cannot quite keep up on the Continental breakfast of a cup of coffee and a roll and butter, though here you can always have as much bread and butter as you want. Only to want enough bread and butter to keep you up through a hard morning you need some little relish, such as honey, which you can always buy in Sicily, or *pasta di carne*—the potted paste of Crosse and Blackwell, which you are not likely to buy anywhere in Sicily except in Palermo, where Crosse and Blackwell have an agent, just below the palace where Goethe lived and wrote.

The innkeeper, Don Zaro Marziani (Zaro is Sicilian for Rosario, Sicilians clip and corrupt almost every word), is the most liberal soul alive. There was always a profusion of capital bread, both

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white and brown, and capital butter sent all the way from Milan by post, on the breakfast table, while you could have a quart of milk to your coffee if you chose, and the extra charge for boiled eggs was infinitesimal.

The upper-class Sicilian does not take our breakfast seriously. He likes to sit up late and get up late, and take a small cup of coffee, often eating nothing at all with it. What he calls breakfast we call lunch. He eats a hearty meal at twelve or half-past. At the "Victoria" we used to have about three courses of meat, and fish and omelettes or macaroni for lunch, followed by cheese and quantities of oranges, apples, and figs; while for dinner we had soup and fish and an entrée, and a joint and some cooked vegetable before the delicious chicken and salad, sweets, cheese, and fruits, which invariably wound up the meal. There was wine *ad libitum* at both lunch and dinner. I do not think it would be possible to make an Englishman, unfamiliar with Sicily, grasp all the charm and quaintness of a real Sicilian inn like the Hotel Victoria, where the landlord and his wife do the catering and cooking between them, and the eldest son and his wife do nearly all the waiting.

DON GIOVANNI

Don Giovanni, the other son, who is treated as a genius, takes beautiful photographs, and does nothing but odd jobs like making pets of the livestock that are going to be killed for your meals, and doing or superintending the carpentering and plastering which are always going on in rural Sicily. For there, as in Australia, if your house is not large enough you may send for a carpenter and nail another room on to the house, or you may (for your stone is on the spot and costs nothing, and plaster is cheap, and most labourers understand rudimentary building and plastering) employ masonry instead of weather boards. I fancy also that Don Giovanni takes the garden under his fostering wing. It is wonderfully picturesque, and some of the plaster-work effects are the happiest I have seen, in a humble way, even in Italy, where rough plaster-work is quite a fine art.



IN THE GARDEN OF THE HOTEL VICTORIA THE HORSESHOE BELVEDERE.

FROM AN OIL PAINTING BY MARGARETE THOMAS.

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THE HOTEL VICTORIA

THE ENTRANCE TO THE HOTEL VICTORIA

If it were not for the sign there would be little to distinguish the front door of the Hotel Victoria from the ordinary *basso*, or open basement in which the small Sicilian shopkeeper always carries on his business, except of course that there is no stock-in-trade exposed, nor even a string of samples tied across it. It is quite dark enough for an orthodox shop, in a land where the heat of the day is a burden for so many months of the year. From this dark *basso*, a dark staircase (of fine red marble) conducts you up to a sort of landing where Don Zaro keeps his books and transacts his business, though he carries all his money (and he acts as a kind of banker for his guests) upon his person.

THE DINING-ROOM AT THE HOTEL VICTORIA

At the back of this a little drawbridge carries you across a chasm into the garden, of which you get the barest glimpses, behind the quaint congeries of kitchen, and pigeon-house, and hothouse plants growing in rusty kerosene tins, arranging themselves artistically round a picturesque narrow stone stair. That is not the way into the hotel; it is the main entrance to the garden and the garden-house, of which hereafter. For the present you grope through a dark passage behind Don Zaro's secretaire into the dining-room, which is unique. It is a long, low, dark, vaulted room, down one side of which Don Giovanni has painted a Sicilian landscape in the style of a photographer's background. Only it is a real Sicilian landscape, and the effect of the porch in the foreground, from which you are supposed to see it, is heightened by having actual palm leaves and vases laid against it, in a way which is shockingly inartistic and successful. A long trestle table runs the whole length of the room and is covered with coarse clean linen, and always has a few bowls of well-arranged flowers, often wild flowers, arranged, I suppose, by the younger signora. The floor is strewn with goatskins. They give a look of barbaric picturesqueness, but I object to goat, either on or under the table. The two windows let on to a balcony on the Corso, and a second and still

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smaller and darker passage from the farther end admits to the family bedroom and the kitchens, from which the food is brought in on great steaming dishes by Don Pancrazio's pretty wife, generally with her

eldest born, a charming and typical Sicilian child with great dark eyes, hanging on to her kirtle—I am sure you might call the short skirt she wears a kirtle.

THE SALON OF THE HOTEL VICTORIA

Another door, a large, usual sort of door, leads you into the salon, which is a really charming room, with its squareness made artistic by its height and the bold, round vaultings of its ceiling. Don Zaro has some good pictures in this room, which, as the hotel is an old and noted artists' house, probably paid their painters' bills, or are going to if they are ever sold. The furniture is quite

luxurious in a plain way, and runs to deep rug-covered lounges, which harmonise with the spirit of the room. On the centre table Don Giovanni's photographs of Taormina and Syracuse lie for sale, and are duly turned over by every guest in the house every evening. It is astonishing what a lot of photographs quite thrifty people will buy when they see the stock running out of the picture of some favourite bit of landscape or ruined palace.



Photo by M. M. M. M.

DON PANCRAZIO'S PRETTY WIFE

THE IDIOT AND THE MONKEY

THE IDIOT AND THE MONKEY

From the salon a queer winding stairway took you up past the idiot's room to the little plateau overlooking the little precipice where the monkey had led a caged and furious existence for many years. The idiot and the monkey were two of the most noted of the inhabitants of Taormina. The idiot, especially, was a curiosity, and he might have been more dangerous than the monkey if they had broken out, for he was immensely strong, and could do a lot of damage before he was overpowered. His body seemed to have absorbed the strength which is generally divided between body and mind. He had always, however, been the most docile being. The idiot was an extraordinary-looking creature. He had a very small head, slits of eyes which showed hardly anything but white, the regular luney's futile smile dashed with innocent cunning, and a tremendous muscular development. He spent every day and all day in doing the same thing—carrying up huge pitchers of water from the fountain to fill the tall amphoræ, of the antique pattern, studded about the garden for watering purposes. He was always humming a song, with no words and no tune. But I never more truly understood what an idiot he was than on the day when we first left Taormina. He carried down our trunks as if they had been so many cardboard boxes, and seeing how poor he was—he had never had any shoes or stockings in his life, and from his waist upwards his clothes would hardly hang together—I presented him with a whole paper franc. His face fell in bitter disappointment. It lighted up again when the minute afterwards some villain about the hotel gave him a two soldo piece—a penny—for it; he had only expected a halfpenny.

His general characteristics were innocent good nature and a mind with which no communication was possible. I think the monkey was gone in the top story too. If he was not, he very well might have been, for he had lived I do not know how many years in a cage six by three, without, I believe, ever coming out, and with mighty little protection from the airs and dews of heaven.

In the mere matter of food he was, I suppose, as happy as a

IN SICILY

monkey well could be, for every guest in the hotel brought him out some scraps from meals, and fed him in a different language. It might be orange, or it might be orange peel; it might be bread and butter, or it might be figs and nuts. He had a good appetite, too, that monkey, because, though he was very discriminating between what he would eat and what he would not eat, while the *forestieri* were engaged in a friendly rivalry of offering him the scraps of their dinner, he was quite content to fill up on leaves of the prickly pear at odd times. These leaves have terrific spines, like so many needles, but the palate of a monkey or a goat is not tender about such trifles.

Confinement had soured that monkey's temper. You might give him the tit-bits of your own meals every day for a month, and at the end of it a little piece of fancied neglect, or perhaps even a dislike to the pattern of your trousers, would turn him into an ungovernable wild beast, springing with terrific roars and fury at the side of his cage which was nearest you. The cage seemed flimsy and inadequate, but it had successfully borne the brunt of thousands of such exhibitions.

THE GARDEN—AN ARTIST'S PARADISE

The garden is an artist's paradise, the very essence of picturesqueness. Into a tiny fraction of an acre it compresses the whole theatrical properties of a Southern garden. Near that unchristian monkey there is a little poem in plaster, which Miss Heriot photographed regularly every day—a horseshoe-shaped belvedere with two small tall columns rising at the horseshoe ends, which the elegant Sicilian flower-pots on their tops flooded over with carnation blossoms—about as dainty a bit for the artist as anything you could get out of Pompeii. It is like a bit of old Pompeii. All round the horseshoe runs an elegant plaster lounge, such as you get in the nooks of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, and the Borghese Gardens at Rome, and down the centre is a marble table for lunch in the open air or coffee on a sultry night. You look over the back of the seat and you find that you are perched on the brow of a little precipice, while a few feet away, through an open gate, you can see a tessellated pavement laid

AN ALMOND GROVE

down by ancient Roman hands. The garden stretches from this little belvedere to the terraced garden-house, crowned by another belvedere, with a glorious view of Etna. On the lower side it is bounded by the inn itself; on the upper a lane divides it from the side of the mountain crowned by the Saracen castle. On the lower flanks of the hill is an almond grove, a wall of pink blossom when March is young, a wall of tender green with swelling, peach-like



Photo by Man. Jan.

THE ALMOND GROVE BELOW THE CASTLE ROCK

almonds when April comes in. Above that come prickly pear and brown crag. The garden is only a few yards long, and a few yards wide, but in that space it contrives to have what our ancestors knew as *pleachèd walks*, as well as the *pièce d'eau* so dear to the soul of the Italian and the Frenchman. This particular *pièce d'eau* is tenanted by gold fish of a fiery red and numerous tails, who sail serenely round the roots of an arum as large as a palmetto, with flowers showing sometimes a foot's length of snowy white. Gold fish were made for Japs and Italians. The amphora behind us is vested

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in ivy growing as close as the ampelopsis. The other great amphoræ have pleasing coats of lichen.

The garden has very fine orange trees, mandarins, lemons, and nespoli. There are one or two eucalypti. Below the trees is one rich tangle of lettuces, salad-dandelions, fiery marigolds, huge, deep, purple violets with leaves several inches across, onions, tall poppies with seeds like 'Turks'-head pumpkins, incredibly tall snap-dragons of marvellous colours, geraniums quite ten feet high, and nasturtiums and roses and vines climbing up any height into the trees, and the two former sending showers of bright blossoms through them. And at intervals in this jungle are the mossy old amphoræ, holding their dozen gallons each, giving all this vegetation its draughts of life. They are kept filled by the idiot, who all day long brings pitchers of water on his head and tilts them in. At the end of the garden you climb up, under arches trailing with roses, on to the terrace of the garden-house, which has one end peeping over a chasm at Etna and is surrounded by a brick parapet, with a hollow top full in spring of fragrant frisas, whose rich creamy white is shot with faint streaks of purple and yellow.



Photo by Max. nani.

THE GARDEN HOUSE OF THE HOTEL VICTORIA

THE VIEW OF ETNA

THE VIEW OF ETNA

The first time we were at the Hotel Victoria we chose to live in this garden-house, for its southern windows and the wooden belvedere on its top commanded such a royal view of Etna, while from the other side of the belvedere we looked full on the mellow, salmony-pink theatre, embosomed in the rifted hill, which had its outer slope buried in almond orchards almost to the sea. And either way we looked down on billowy, brown, chimneyless roofs of ancient tiles, and a hundred different elevations.

What a view it was, that southward view towards Etna! At our very feet was a queer old palace round a cortile, with blocked-up Romanesque windows, and a narrow stairway into a poor little garden with decaying oranges and lemons hanging from the trees. Be they never so decaying, the golden globes hanging from the dark foliage lighten even a squally day, and we did get squalls with a vengeance at Taormina! The roofs of many elevations rise to the dark watch-tower and the little white terra-cotta belfry of S. Giuseppe, from which the embattled wall climbs to the grim, inaccessible hermitage and the Saracen castle rising over the crags and prickly-pear thickets. Sea and cape lay before us like a map all the way to Syracuse, and the great head of Etna, the often-clouded Mother Etna, we felt bound to call it. We could trace the trailing skirt of Etna almost down to Catania. There are queer little folds all the way up, which we should have taken for batteries if we had not known that no fortification could be so gigantic as to show like that at such a distance. Etna in spring is seldom the same for five minutes together. One minute we would see its majestic snow-mantled dome standing up sharp and clear against the sky like Fujiyama, then clouds drifted round it like a scarf upon its shoulders, or veiled its head, and it might be long before we got its horizon again. It is apt to be clear at sunrise, with long radiating shafts of rose running down it. Moonlight gilds the snows. In heavy rain, the whole vast form is hidden in a wall of black. It is Etna which has set the crown upon Taormina.

CHAPTER V.

THE THEATRE OF TAORMINA

THE HILL OF TAURUS

AS I sit on the verandah of my hired house at Salcombe, putting the finishing touches on this chapter, I am irresistibly reminded of Taormina, for the sky is of Sicilian blue on this summer morning, and I look down from the heights into a clear blue sea, spangled with a million sparkles and dotted with small sails. And a great cape fills my eye, as it did at Taormina when I looked down from the site of the destroyed Greek temple at the top of the theatre of Taurus. Also I can see a charming white figure in the stern of a little sailing boat, the same figure that caught my eye at Naples when I rescued Mrs. Heriot from the *facchini*. The name Taurus seems to have been particularly applied to the hill from whose bosom this wonderful theatre was scooped out three or four hundred years before Christ, and the temple in question was not destroyed by the Duke of S. Stefano, or even by the Saracens, but by the Romans when they took over the Greek theatre with other effects at Taormina and proceeded to alter it to fit themselves.

STRAZZERI'S GUIDE TO THE THEATRE

I do not know why I should describe the theatre in detail. I do not believe that more than one person in ten, out of all the people who go to Taormina, looks into the theatre. They all go to it every day during their stay in this city or village, whichever one ought to call it. Some of them even scamper through it, with the aid of the diverting



ETNA AND THE THEATRE OF TAORMINA
FROM A PAINTING BY MARGARET THOMAS

DESCRIPTION OF THE THEATRE

plan, written in four languages, by Niccolo Strazzeri, the keeper of Taormina's antiquities. If it is as diverting in the other languages as it is in English, they ought to be well pleased with the experiment. But they do not go there to look at the theatre, but from it, and the vista, of which I have spoken before, between its ruined columns to Etna and the sea is one of the most unequalled in the world.

If Signor Strazzeri's sketch conveys an accurate idea of the theatre before it was ruined, all I can say is that I feel forgiving towards the former Duke of S. Stefano, whom every guide-book and every inhabitant brands as the destroyer. It would no doubt be more curious and interesting to have the great theatre in full working order, a dictionary of antiquities in itself, but the view is very consoling. Signor Strazzeri begins his little monograph thus: "In publishing this short description of the antique theatre of Taormina, together with some notices referring to its Proscenium, situation, and environs, I have been induced to do so, solely for the purpose of supplying with an authentical vade mecum everybody who visits this place to inspect this monument and to give them a souvenir of this delightful and famous country." And a little lower down he reiterates: "As I mentioned it already, the purpose of this little book is to give an authentical vade mecum to the persons who honour with their visit our respected monument and do not possess the necessary knowledge of archæology."

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE THEATRE

His general description of the theatre is worth quoting entire: "This Theatre has been erected by the Ancient on the summit of a rocky promontory, situated East of Taormina on the top of which there is an old Saracenic Castle. This promontory descends by smooth slopes towards the Jonian Sea to the Cape St. Leo. The unrivalled beauty of this situation, the panorama of the sea, on the left, the Scylla, the Charybdis, and the extreme part of Calabria, annexed to Sicily like an island. On the right the wide fields of Mount Ætna, rich in vegetation and picturesque towns, together with

IN SICILY

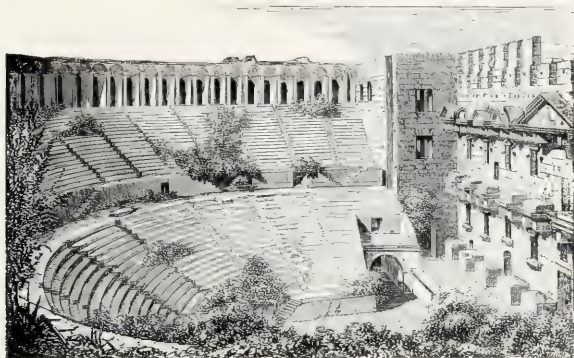
the gigantic volcano, which you often hear thunder and see throwing out fire. All this aid to the scenic effects and overcome the spectator in such a degree, that, all his life he will remember this wonderful spectacle. It is true that, although other ancient towns of Greece and Italy can be proud of larger and more brilliant theatres there is a fact impossible to deny that regarding its situation, the charm of nature and the beauty of its environs, Taormina's Theatre is superior to every one of them; indeed it may be said, that it occupies, not only the first place, but is unparalleled in all the world. Many travellers, who had seen a great part of the globe, told me so. Everybody will agree that it is by no means easy to decide at what time and under which reign this theatre has been built. I am sorry to say that there are no historical notices to be found on this behalf, and it is better not to believe what is told on this account in the travellers' guides, and take all the informations in this direction as conjectures."

THE THEATRE IS BOTH GREEK AND ROMAN

I was quite content, with Signor Strazzeri, to take all information in this direction as conjectures, and would even take his word for it when, forgetting what he has just said, he fixes the date as 358 B.C. in the very next paragraph. All the more responsible guides are agreed that the theatre was first Greek and then Roman. The plan was mainly Greek, and the superstructure mainly Roman. The small Greek temple at the top, whose foundations were discovered a few years ago, will prove its origin, for it would not have been there if the theatre had been purely Roman. As a matter of fact, the Romanization of the superstructure renders it much more interesting, for though we have plenty of Roman amphitheatres in a high state of preservation, Roman theatres are very rare in comparison with Greek. As a matter of fact, there is only one example of its kind more perfect than the theatre of Taormina, and that is at an out-of-the-way place called Aspendus in Asia Minor, of which I am enabled, by the courtesy of Messrs. Chatto and Windus, to give the admirable illustration which appeared in their Guhl and Koner's

DETAILS OF THE THEATRE

Life of the Greeks and Romans (price 7s. 6d.). To understand Greco-Roman theatres properly the reader must refer to this book, which goes into the subject fully, and gives the numerous requisite illustrations. But this picture will serve to show what the theatre of Taormina was like before it was destroyed for its marbles. Another point which tells the expert that it is a mixture of the Roman and the Greek is that there are remains of two different stages and two different arenas, the Greek arena having been rectangular, and only



THE THEATRE OF ASPENDUS

What the theatre of Taormina was like before its destruction

From Guhl and Koner's 'Life of the Greeks and Romans,' by permission of Messrs. Chatto and Windus

having occupied about one-third of the space of the semicircular Roman arena. As our chief authority says, the shape of the geometrical plan, the foundations, and the interior walls of the proscenium show their Greek origin. After the Romans had finished this theatre, the authors and poets wrote a great deal about it to flatter the praetors and the Cæsars.

DETAILS OF THE THEATRE

The broad and sweeping flight of steps, which is the first point you come to as you enter the theatre, was the ancient regia. This

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was the general entrance until Augustus ordered that a separate entrance should be made for the women. The little door on the right leading off these steps conducted to the first *præinctio*, which contained the luxurious seats reserved for senators, magistrates, and vestals. A stair a little higher led to the second *præinctio*, reserved for the nobility and patricians, and the third *præinctio*, that of the citizens. Round the top of the theatre ran a double portico, and above that there was a terrace. Signor Strazzeri points out that the interior portico was composed of more than forty-five granite pillars, leaning on the brick wall of the *cavea*. This portico may have been used either as a refuge when it rained, for the three *præinctiones* of seats above mentioned were open to the sky, or it may have been used on crowded occasions for the people who could not be accommodated in the third *præinctio*. The terrace was a promenade, and it is possible that slaves and other unconsidered persons were allowed to see what they could of the performance from it. The brick wall which separated the bottom of the double portico from the *cavea*, as the part of the auditorium containing the seats was called, was pierced with ten staircases known as vomitories, through which people were admitted to the third *præinctio*. There were also thirty-six niches in this wall, probably intended for statues. Murray, in his excellent Sicilian guide-book, pooh-poohs the idea of their having contained "acoustic vases," whatever they may have been like. He points out that even in its present ruined condition an untrained voice can make itself heard to any part of the building. There are remains of a similar brick wall dividing the lower edge of the *cavea* from the arena which has a passage underneath it leading into the arena, which the Romans may have used for the wild beasts in their gladiatorial combats.

WHAT THE ROMANS WANTED IN A THEATRE

The reason why Roman theatres are so rare is that the Romans soon tired of such poor stuff as a stage play unless it involved some mechanical triumph like producing a lake large enough for a sea fight

DETAILS OF THE THEATRE

in the arena. We know that the Coliseum itself was prostituted to such base uses, and the theatre at Taormina was only saved by the fact that there was a Naumachia of unusual size but a few yards away from it. The Roman's taste ran in the direction of real tragedies. He was not satisfied with stage deaths; real blood of slaves and captives and gladiators was shed like water for his amusement; and in those days, when lions and other wild beasts from the north coast of Africa were easier to procure than bulls from Spain in the nineteenth century, he varied gladiatorial combats with fights for life between men and beasts of prey.

Where, as at Taormina, there was no amphitheatre, he adapted the theatre for these combats. I have often wondered whether at the tiny Greek theatre whose remains are partly uncovered, partly under the popular church at the other end of the Strada Timeo from the great theatre, the conquered Greeks used to go in for a little high art on their own account, giving Æschylus as the Elizabethan Stage Guild gives Shakespeare, or interpreting Lucian as the disciples of the Independent Theatre interpret Ibsen.



Photo by Mas. Jani.
A CHILD OF THE OLD GREEK TYPE

MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE THEATRE

Of the seats in the cavea, the decent part of the auditorium, there are only the slightest traces. Murray traces five on the east side below the first præinctio, and a few in the higher part towards the middle. They had the misfortune to be constructed of marble, and

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the Duke of S. Stefano wanted them for his palace, and he made mighty little showing with them, as far as one can judge from the parts of his palace which are shown. Signor Strazzeri says that the three præcinctiones were separated by galleries, and that small stairs led from one to the other. The Roman seems to have built a stage about one-third across the arena for plays and dancing. From the centre of the arena runs the subterranean passage, described by Signor Strazzeri as "a canal with an opening in the wall of the postcenium. Used as a sluice for rain waters and as a reservoir; perhaps also as an acoustic vault, or even as a prison. Two other vaults, parallel with the scæna, were used by employees of the theatre as a gangway." But Murray suggests that more probably the bronteium, where brass vessels containing stones were kept for the imitation of thunder, was either in this passage, or the similar but narrower passage at a higher level which crosses it at right angles.

THE STAGE

The most uneducated eye can distinguish where the stage was. The average reader would probably only be puzzled if I entered into the discussion between the various guides as to where the altars on the stage stood, or how many niches it had, or where the statue of Apollo stood, and where the statue of Bacchus. As Signor Strazzeri points out, between "the altars were three large doors, the middle one, called *regia*, was destroyed by lightning; the other two, called *ospitali*, were used by the actors to enter the scene." I will not puzzle my readers with attempting to explain the use of the various passages, but join hands with Murray in pointing out that the lofty and spacious chambers in each of the stage wings were not temples of Apollo and Bacchus, but *vestiaria*—actors' dressing-rooms—or the rooms in which they kept large stage properties, like the Car of the Bacchantes, for there are another pair of chambers above them which seem intended for actors' dressing-rooms, because the stairs from them lead to the stage. As Signor Strazzeri's sketch restoring the front shows, there were two rows of columns, and the ruins show them to have been of various colours, some cipollino, and some African marble.

GUIDES TO TAORMINA

THE USES THE THEATRE WAS PUT TO

The theatre seems to have been used for as many different things as the Casino at Ostend, which I have seen used indifferently for gambling, newspaper reading, concerting, boxing matches, dancing, and fancy fairs. According to Signor Strazzeri, "the bloody fights of gladiators took place in the Arena. The foreign ambassadors were received there. People gathered there also, to discuss the affairs of the Republic; often deliberations took place on rewards and punishments. Justice was also administered and the criminals executed. In this place Philosophers discussed their theorems, poets and writers read their works."

THE GUIDES TO TAORMINA

If any of my readers should desire to "do" the theatre at Taormina in an earnest, adequate manner, they cannot do better than buy Signor Strazzeri's pamphlet, which has a couple of excellent plans, and the best view of the theatre on its outside. I forget whether it cost half a franc or a franc. In either case it is well worth it, and in spite of the difficulties in which his diverting but praiseworthy effort to give his guide in the language of every pilgrim into whose hands it is likely to fall involve him, it is really a valuable contribution to the subject. It has one golden quality for the work of an Italian, his information is not hidden, like the traditional needle in the bottle of hay, in pages and pages of high-faluting generalities. Most Italian guide-books are not content with calling every goose a swan, they call every sparrow an eagle. The other Italian guide-book to Taormina which I have examined is an instance to the point. It deals with the whole town, and instead of taking the various historically or architecturally interesting buildings seriatim, telling you their names and giving all that is known about them, it is mostly taken up with comparing the achievements of the Senate and people of Taormina to the achievements of—we will say—the *Senatus populus que Romanus*. It certainly does not consider Syracuse, which was for a brief while the greatest city in the world, worthy of

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comparison with Taormina. Murray, of course, though a new edition is wanted, is indispensable, and there is a Baedeker, with which the local guide, by one Alfio Cali, quarrels.

HOW I SPENT MY TIME AT THE THEATRE

I am afraid that I myself, after one dictionary-of-antiquities examination of the ruins with Miss Heriot, who was wildly interested in them, and her fiancé, who did not know what on earth I was talking about, was content to revel in their beauty without bothering my head as to the uses claimed by rival pundits for the different chambers and passages. I forgot to go into the little museum at the top of the theatre, the view from the top down to the cypresses of S. Caterina and the Cape of S. Andrea were such revelations of pure beauty, and there was such a gay cushion of wild flowers at one's feet—the crimson velvet vetches, the yellow and party-coloured pea-vetches, the tall lupins, blue and white, the large sage which has clusters of great lemon-coloured flowers something like *calceolarias*, the marvellous multitudes of marigolds almost scarlet in their intensity, the broad white smile of the daisies, and the huge bushes of spurge, which grow as high as your head and are covered with bunches of golden flowers.

I am a worse sinner than I believed myself to be. On going through my scrap-books I cannot discover that, beyond the schoolboy's examination notes which have furnished the above discussion, I wrote down a single word about the theatre of Taormina, which, after all, owes half its fame among tourists to being the best place for honeymooners in all Taormina.

See Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography* (published by John Murray), Vol. II, page 1114.

CHAPTER VI.

OPERA AT TAORMINA

GOING TO THE OPERA

TAORMINA has one modern theatre as well as two ancient. It is true that the former was a church, and that neither the building nor the methods are very modern. But it is very highly thought of at Taormina. During dinner, the old Norwegian artist, M. Nicolaiesen, came up and begged us to go and see the little



Photogr. Crupi.

THE FAÇADE OF THE PALAZZO CORVAIA, AND THE PIAZZA VITTORIO IMMANUEL
UPON WHICH THE THEATRE STANDS

IN SICILY

opera company which was to open in Taormina that night. There was quite a good tenor, he said, and the company was very poor. We did not require to be told that the takings would not be very great at Taormina. It was almost superfluous for him to add that there was no necessity for us to buy the tickets beforehand. So after dinner we walked down the Corso Umberto Primo and across the Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele (all of which took less than five minutes) to the Teatro Regina Margherita, which looked more like a barn than a chapel, when it was in full theatrical swing. The first difficulty was that as there was no advertised list of prices, and we did not know the names of the various kinds of seats, it was hard to explain to the Sicilian cashier, who could not speak Italian, what we wanted. An inspiration seized me, to push past the doorkeeper into the theatre, and choose the kind of seat I should like. The price could not be formidable. Seeing what looked like a promising supporter of the opera standing bewildered in the auditorium, the tenor came from behind the curtain, took a note of the box I required, which was in the middle of the grand tier facing the stage, and most obligingly went with me to explain to the cashier. The tenor, of course, at the Italian opera, spoke Italian. It cost me six or seven francs, and was large enough to hold about six people. There were no tickets, the tenor showed us to our places.

THE FOOTLIGHTS AND THE ORCHESTRA

Presently a man came in with a box of matches to light the footlights. The opera did not begin at any fixed time; but as soon as there was an audience of twenty in the more expensive places, including one Italian family in full dress, the drop-scene was removed. I had spent about half an hour wondering how that drop-scene would move, but when it actually was moved, I forgot to look how it was done. I thought it would go out sideways. It was a simple-looking drop-scene, consisting of Etna treated in a bold outline sort of way, and an agave in a pot, and a terrace looking over the sea. Presently two *carabinieri* came in with the air with which they step into a railway station. This gave importance to the affair, and the opera began.

THE COMPANY

The orchestra consisted of a conductor and four. The conductor played the piano with his left hand to give volume. The chorus consisted of five women and two peasants. Three of the women had babies, who sat down in the wings like little Japs and joined in the chorus in their own way. The scenery had red and blue fringe at the side curtains.

THE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE TROUPE

Women in Italy age with inconceivable quickness, and these had aged. Their frames were large, and they looked ridiculous in short skirts. The skirts were cotton of the poorest description. Such



Photo by]

[the Author.

THE KIND OF WOMEN THEY HAD IN
THE CHORUS

barn-stormers I never saw. There was also a comedian, with the skinniest legs, in trousers which fitted them like a skin. He wore a black and white check suit as staring as a bookmaker's, and one of the new straw hats of the Monte Carlo shape. This was no doubt to make him look wicked. He was a human rat with rather a comical leer. The heroine wore black stockings and dirty white shoes, about

nines. She gave the comedian her purse to take care of, and the humour seemed chiefly to consist of packing an inconceivable number of words into a minute—inconceivable for an Italian, I mean; the most ordinary Italian has extraordinary powers in this respect. Presently there was a hero commanding five female guards—*à la* Gaiety. The hero was a woman, very highly developed. There was a dashing jocularly about her which took the *carabinieri*, and the coastguards, who wore black kid gloves, and the real Taormina part of the audience by storm.

There was also a queen, who had not much to do; so she talked

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to the babies squatting like Japs in the wings, who had helped themselves to some of the scanty properties of the opera, and whose ball had rolled on to the stage, where it nearly perished beneath the knees of the hero in an impassioned love-scene.

As the performance was in Sicilian instead of Italian, we were unable to gather much from it, except that the mature Italian figure is not suited for the uniform of the Gaiety Guards. There was also a king who had, naturally, a red face like other kings in comic operas, and a chamberlain whose lace was made to look like an antimacassar. They did the heavy comedy. The light comedy was done by the rat, who ought to have been driving a cab in Naples—one of the cabmen with such shocking cabs that they offer to take you half price. The conductor conducted with his fingers.

THE TENOR DID NOT APPEAR

But all the time the tenor had never appeared. We found out afterwards that the management expected the foreigners would only care for the tenor, and would go as soon as he had sung his Neapolitan songs, which had nothing whatever to do with the piece, but were put in because they were understood to be a greater draw for the English than the opera.

We waited until after ten o'clock without any trace of the tenor, and then we really could not stand it any longer. All the other foreigners except two plucked up heart and followed our example. These two were Miss Heriot and Mr. Witheridge, who had a seven-franc box to themselves. The tête-à-tête having been arranged for his benefit, it did not signify to them where they were. Very likely they had not noticed the absence of the tenor.

THE TENOR RETURNS TO THE CHARGE

Now, anyone but an Italian would have been crushed by this exhibition of disgust, but to the Italian it simply suggested a fresh opening for making money. As early as breakfast next morning Don Pancrazio came to say that to-night was to be the tenor's benefit,

COUNTRY BUMPKINS

and that he would without fail sing the Neapolitan songs at nine; would I take another box? I did not want to go in the least, and refused. I did not want to hear the tenor, I preferred not to hear him, I wanted to save my evening for writing, but Miss Heriot came round with a fine glow of womanly pity, that was amazingly becoming, to say how poor the tenor was, and I was weak. Besides, I reflected that I need not go, that this could make no difference to Miss Heriot, if I bought the ticket. She made everyone in the hotel buy tickets, and all except ourselves went, although it was raining dogs and horses, but in about a quarter of an hour they came back, looking like cats that had been dropped overboard. They had forgotten that the Corso of Taormina, which has no pavements, but is a road closely flagged from the houses on one side to the houses on the other, becomes a river in any really earnest rain. I was quite pleased. We had paid our six francs like the rest, but we had not got wet, nor wasted any time, and with this I dismissed the matter from my mind.

MISS HERIOT RESUSCITATES THE TENOR

But at lunch-time the next day Miss Heriot came with a very persuasive face to say that the tenor had acted in a most high-



Photo by Cruppi.

COUNTRY BUMPKINS

IN SICILY

minded manner; he was so overcome at the idea of the foreigners having paid their money for nothing that he desired us all to come that night instead without charge. The tenor was like any other tenor, he did not wish to perform to an audience of coastguards and *carabinieri* and country bumpkins, and he knew that if the foreigners did not occupy the boxes nobody else would. So his high-mindedness was not going to cost him anything. I objected to going very much, but she had a pretty way of insisting, and we went.

CROSSING THE RUBICON

We were rather discouraged at the very beginning; we found that there are, after all, disadvantages in having your garden above your house. The day and night before several inches of rain had fallen, and the garden was not accustomed to such quantities of water, so it had thrown it off down the picturesque stair which led to the landing where Don Zaro had his office. No lake formed there, previous experience had probably led Don Zaro to take precautions against such a contingency, but he had taken no precautions against a river running through his house down his red marble staircase and out of his front door. He probably regarded that as the easiest way of getting rid of the water, but it does not put a lady (or even a gentleman) in the best frame of mind for sitting out the performance of a country-town opera company to wade through such a river, as she leaves her house. Thus jaundiced in our view we found the poverty of the dresses more pathetic than we had noticed it as being two nights before, though the orchestra from time to time, as the opera required a fuller volume, was increased from four to six. We were not even satisfied with the gold tinsel stripes added to the prince's trousers, and the swansdown frill added to the very *décolletées* shoulders of the *capitano*.

LIKE THE THEATRE IN JAPAN

But though there was not much make in the frocks of the performers the audience made a very good show. The *contadini*

THE TENOR TRUE TO HIS TRADITIONS

in the gallery were enraptured and demonstrative, their demonstrativeness usually taking the form of hissing; and the babies belonging to the chorus were so comically like Japanese babies as they crawled about the wings—indeed that, combined with the rubbing of our knees against the fragrant pine-wood of the rough woodwork of the boxes, made us feel as if we were back in Japan, and half expect Danjuro to appear at thrilling moments.

But after all nothing contributed so much to our amusement on this dull evening as a very objectionable German couple who were staying in our hotel, and took the waitress with them into a box. She looked so much more the lady than the wife did.

THE TENOR WAS TRUE TO HIS TRADITIONS

And indeed we wanted something, for we had gone there expressly to hear the tenor sing the Neapolitan songs, and we understood that as they had nothing to do with the play he would give them as soon as ever there was a respectable audience. "Nine o'clock at the latest," Don Pancrazio said. Ten o'clock came and went, but we did not hear the tenor, so we left, and this time Miss Heriot did not stay behind, but came back with our party and spoke with American frankness about Italian veracity.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FLOWERS OF TAORMINA

ON THE GENERAL SAMENESS OF WILD FLOWERS

TAORMINA in spring, which is the time when most people visit it, has beautiful wild flowers, though they are not equal to those of Syracuse, either in the number of varieties, or in the massing of colour. Indeed, I have seen nothing so fine as the meadows of Syracuse since I left Grand Pré, the great meadow of Nova Scotia, one June day nearly ten years ago. Syracuse has, moreover, one or two gorgeous blossoms which are wanting in Nova Scotia, such as the brilliant rose-crimson wild gladiolus, and the Sicilian daisy. I never saw the gladiolus at Taormina, but we had a feast of floral form and colour the day we walked to Monte Zirreto. Before starting we indulged in a laugh at Miss Heriot's expense, which we had occasion afterwards to wish unlaughed. Hearing that she was going to Sicily, the Old Corner bookseller at Boston, U.S., had pressed on her a guide to the Alpine flora of Switzerland, which he assured her would be most useful. The odd thing is that it was. A great many of the Sicilian wild flowers are ambitious sisters and cousins of our English wild flowers, and those which are not we mostly found to be sisters or cousins of Alpine flowers. Nature seems only to have two lots of wild flowers for Europe—one for the places where they get plenty of sun, and one for the places where they do not.

WE WERE AT MONTE ZIRRETO

Like some other ladies of Boston, pretty Miss Heriot was by way of being serious. She knew her botany lesson very well; she had

THE FLOWERS OF TAORMINA

not applied it much to wild flowers, but she had a first-rate equipment of American shrewdness and cuteness, and she was the most valuable member of the party in identifying the flowers which had no congeners in England, and were therefore unknown to us. We swung out of our hotel at the brisk business-like pace which people affect at the beginning of an expedition, although it is only to be for a mile



Photo by C. R. P.

A TAORMINA ROAD
PRICKLY PEAR

or two, and, going out of the Messina Gate, past a few houses, began the climb to Monte Zirreto. One of these houses, the studio, had huge masses of stocks on its wall-top. I do not know whether in this instance they were wild or sown, but of one thing I was quite certain, that those who have only seen stocks growing in England do not know what stocks are. Here they grow into a regular shrub, with beautiful deep magenta or rose-coloured blossoms, as large and delicately shaped as dog-wood flowers, and rolling out great volumes of fragrance on every breeze.

IN SICILY

CYCLAMENS, FENNEL, AND SICILIAN SPURGES

We were particularly anxious to find wild cyclamens, for the day before the young signora had put on the table a couple of bowls full of small old-rose cyclamens, which she said had been brought in by the boys from Monte Zirreto. We took one of the boys who had brought them as a guide. The first wild flower that we passed was the feathery-leaved fennel (*finocchio*), whose blossoms have sticks as tall as our mulleins, and are enclosed in curious pale green sheaths which look like nightcaps, and are as large as a small cauliflower. The spurges were much showier; indeed, the Sicilian spurge was astonishing. Spurge of one variety or another is one of our commonest wild flowers in England, but with us it is sometimes only a few inches, and at the most only two or three feet high, and its blossoms are so inconspicuous that you might very well take them for yellowing leaves, at the top of the stronger foliage. Spurges are easily recognisable, for when you snap them off a sticky, milky fluid gushes out. In Sicily I have seen them grow ten feet high, with a stalk as thick as a strong man's arm, and throwing out enough shady boughs to protect one from the sun; but their flowers are their chief glory. They are covered with innumerable bunches of golden blossoms which grow like bunches of mountain-ash berries, or the small cherries which the Scotch call geans. These glittering blossoms, combined as they often are with great patches of genesta, will make the whole side of a tall mountain glitter with golden fire.

Stephana wished to call the spurge by its Latin name—*Euphorbia*. But it would have been an outrage. They have decent sub-tropical *Euphorbie*, what one might call palm-house *Euphorbie*, running riot in Sicilian gardens.

GENESTAS AND MARIGOLDS

The genesta, which grows here in thickets, wild, and in tall hedges in the garden, is the same plant as you see, in pots surrounded with frills like hams at ball-suppers, on the tables of the suburbs. I have always cherished a hope that the sprig of the *planta genesta* which our

THE FLOWERS OF TAORMINA

Henry II.—or it was his father, Black Fulk of Anjou—bore on his helmet by way of a crest was not this gladdener of Clapham, but the merry wild broom, whose golden tassels are here reared on its tall spikes side by side with that suburban genesta and the giant spurge. The broom is such a knightly plant, so bold and blithe and debonair, and reckless of cold or heat.

Marigolds, of course, there are—the common marigolds—which will sow themselves and flourish on any dust-heap or railway embankment, but which, when planted in a garden and watered regularly, give themselves such lackadaisical airs and hang their heads and leaves if you neglect them for a single day. In Sicily they take on fresh graces, and give forth a hundred blossoms to a square foot almost as bright and red as a geranium.

ANEMONES

In fine contrast with the first lot we passed were the Sicilian anemones, which grow like the Japanese anemones, not like the wild flesh-coloured and pink anemones of England, or the scarlet anemone of Greece and Turkey. Their colour is of a paler or deeper violet. Here they were almost purple, and made Tory favours with the red-orange marigolds.

The English anemone grows in Sicily too; indeed, we saw plenty of them on that walk to Monte Zirreto, some white, some pink, some deep crimson, some almost as violet as the Sicilian anemone itself. The latter's favourite habitat is in the fields of young corn.

TARES AND VETCHES

The Sicilian vetches are glorious, and they grow in profusion on the way to Zirreto, though not in such wealth as at Selinunte, which vies with Syracuse as the floweriest place in Sicily. The wild tares of Sicily rival the wild vetches; the common blue or purple tare grows there with a luxuriance which we fortunately never dream of, but it is eclipsed in size and beauty by the wonderful variegated blue and white tare, which will illumine a whole hedgerow—and they have fine,

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English-looking hedgerows round Taormina. There is an infinite variety of pea-vetches—the white, pink and white, lilac and white, lilac and puce, which recall the combinations of our English sweet-peas; a lovely pale lemon variety, sometimes combined with white; and, most beautiful of them all, a small deep crimson variety with a surface like velvet. Masses of them grow everywhere, but they do not grow tall, nor are the blossoms very large.

I NEVER USE THE LATIN NAMES

I ought, I know, to give the Latin names of all the wild beauties that I am going to mention, but there being, as far as I know, no Sicilian handbook to wild flowers, and I not having the requisite knowledge of botany or the requisite books to hunt them out, must be content to talk of them as a child who knows them by sight and by their familiar household names as the companions of daily walks. And I am afraid that if I attempted to fit them with Latin names from Miss Heriot's *Handbook of Alpine Flora* I should make ridiculous mistakes. Miss Heriot began by referring to them in Latin terminology, but she soon recognised the superior beauty of fine old Saxon names like forget-me-not. Indeed, for her present happy state, forget-me-not is really much more suitable than myosotis, which after all is only a mouse's ear put into dog-Greek.

GULLIES, CYCLAMENS, AND OLEANDERS

Presently we got away from the path and commenced plunging down the narrow gullies of Zirreto in quest of the cyclamen. Delightful little gullies they were, hardly more than big ditch-beds, each with a tiny trickle of clear water at the bottom, for the hills of this dry land are full of springs of water. I suppose that in the old days when Sicily was the garden of the world, and fed the Roman Empire, all these mountain springs were made to take their part in some vast system of irrigation like that which has turned the dry deserts round Salt Lake City into the most smiling farm-lands of the United States. We did not know then of the existence of the big,

THE FLOWERS OF TAORMINA

fat, wicked-looking but harmless black snake which disfigures the Sicilian landscape, or we might not have enjoyed it so much, that rich, ferny tangle, carpeted with violet and cyclamen leaves which lined those steep little gullies. The streams were often overarched by tall, wild oleanders; the boy said they bloomed in May and June. Their dead brown leaves curled like the blossoms of the Japanese tiger lily.

THE TERM EUROPEAN

I do know the Latin name of that—*Lilium auratum*—because it was always called by its Latin name by European residents, and this reminds me that in country places in Sicily one always feels inclined to use the word European as the Greeks and Turks use it, to express the rest of Europe and not to include their own land. We found plenty of the wild garlic, with its snowy, star-like flowers, and down by the banks of the lovely mountain river, which rolled its clear brown waters round and over mossy boulders, there were flowering rushes.

A VALLEY LIKE MYANOSHITA IN JAPAN

That river was just the finishing touch to recall that never-to-be-forgotten gorge of Myanoshita in Japan, which stretches from the sea to the hills below Fujiyama, just as this gorge stretches from the sea to the hills under Etna, the monarch of European volcanoes, embosomed in just such steep mountain-sides, rich with green undergrowth and flowering wild shrubs. Under almost every rock of these mountain-sides the maidenhair grew thickly, and here and there you could not help making the whole air fragrant as you trod, the thyme was so thick. There were masses of a low shrub which, in the appearance and heavy odour of its leaves, reminded me of the wild, scarlet-blossomed azaleas which grow by the acre in Japan, but it was not an azalea, and Miss Heriot's register of Alpine flora could not help us. I have often thought that the odour of those wild azalea leaves, though by no means entirely disagreeable, and even possessed of a certain sweetness, bore a faint suggestion of the smell of the

IN SICILY

skunk. Indeed, I think that a very faint whiff of that small, piebald animal itself is not entirely disagreeable.

THE WILD PEAR AND WILD ARTICHOKE

The gullies to which the boy had conducted us had a fine show of cyclamen leaves, but nary a cyclamen blossom. Perhaps he had picked them over too carefully to ensure getting a halfpenny from the hotel. He asserted that the stretches now covered with pea-vetches and germanders would be concealed in deep bracken a little later. In the distance I saw what I took to be the familiar blackthorn, which Miss Heriot knew by a much grander name, though she was fascinated by its homely English name when she heard it. On coming up to it, or rather down to it, it proved to be a *piro salvaggio*, the wild pear of Sicily, which has both leaf and blossom much about the same size as our blackthorn, though the shrub grows a different shape, resembling in outline a fir-cone. At its best the tree is one thick spike of pure white blossom as close as a clover-head. As we swung round to the Cappuccini Convent, which I cannot describe because I have forgotten what it was particularly like, the valley below us opened up gloriously. A spurge I measured at this point was fully ten feet high and four inches through, and there was a wild artichoke which looked like an octopus thistle. At first I thought it was an acanthus, which is very like the artichoke till its buds break out into their purple blossoms.

DID THE CORINTHIANS IMITATE THEIR CAPITALS FROM THE ACANTHUS OR THE ARTICHOKE?

And here I must make public a grave doubt affecting a large part of Siculo-Greek and Continental-Greek art. A parrot might be excused for repeating that the decoration of the Corinthian capital was derived from the acanthus leaf, for it has been said so often. But I am not at all sure that it is true. The acanthus, alike in leaf and bud, resembles almost exactly the bluish green artichoke, which covers so many miles of Sicily and is one of the staple foods of the

THE FLOWERS OF TAORMINA

island—not the homely white artichoke, which is made into oyster soup and is not supposed to get its proper flavour until it is blackened by the frost, but the regal vegetable with which you have to burn your fingers as you pull scales off it and dip them in melted butter. The Sicilian artichoke is not so large or fine as the great heads you see in Covent Garden ; it is not the same shape, but much more the shape of



ACANTHUS IN BLOSSOM

P. 100. 1 C. 100.

an egg. It is, however, I believe, its ancestor, and our word artichoke is almost identical with *carciofo*.

It is most probable that this favourite delicacy being indigenous to Sicily was always highly prized there as an article of diet. The connection between the Greek communities of Sicily and Corinth was very close and intimate. Corinth was the only Greek city of much importance which had a port on the west or Italian side of Greece, and the stock epithet of Cape Malea, which other Greeks had to round before they could get to Sicily, was *stormy*. Corinth

IN SICILY

was also the mother-city of Syracuse itself and other important Sicilian towns. And Corinth was presumably the place where Corinthian capitals originated. Now why should the Corinthian, a notorious gourmet, go and copy his elegant capitals, with which he hoped to revolutionise Greek architecture, from the acanthus, which is and always has been considered a weed, or rather I should say has been an unconsidered weed, when he had a model nearer to hand in one of the finest delicacies of his table?

I do not believe that the Corinthian capital is founded on the acanthus at all, I believe that it is founded on the artichoke.

This is a long digression, intended to show the reader that this book is not a slavish digest of the stores of knowledge about Sicily accumulated by scholars, but rather a volume of reflections suggested by holiday-making in that delightful land. I may mention that Mr. Witheridge agreed with me.

THE CETRACH FERN AND THE AQUEDUCT

As we approached the Cappuccini, which had a nice Gothic doorway (we always intended to return to make a proper examination, but that we did not do so this book shows), we found a good deal of cetrach—the small scaly spleenwort which flourishes in the British Islands from Devonshire and Wiltshire to Iona, but is not very frequently seen in British ferneries; and great masses of the crimson orpine which makes Torquay so picturesque. Then we came to the fragment of the Greek or Roman aqueduct, the best preserved of the classical remains after the theatre and the cella of S. Pancrazio. This particular aqueduct, which was built to supply Naxos, the mother settlement of the Greeks in Sicily, with water, runs under the main street of Taormina and out through a wall close to the Hotel Belvedere. It was continued formerly through the spot now occupied by the Giardini Railway.

THE ALCANTARA AND THE STAGNONE

Naxos lies on the flat promontory which shoots sharply out to sea on the other side of the little river Alcantara, which is the border

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THE FOUNTAIN NEAR THE MESSINA GATE BEFORE IT WAS RESTORED
FROM AN OIL PAINTING BY MARGARET THOMAS

Vol. I.—I. *for sale*

THE FLOWERS OF TAORMINA

of Taormina on the Catania side. Alcantara is a curious name for a river, seeing that it means (in Arabic) "the bridge," and it is, as Mr. Witheridge said, nothing of a river anyway. There is not much more of it than there is of the city of Naxos, which is reduced to a few stones hidden in a lemon grove. The aqueduct is a fine one, but I never examined it particularly, and I never even saw Lo Stagnone, the last of the five great reservoirs on the hill above, which is said to be very perfect, and is described by the Italian guide-book as being, like the others were, "a species of great modern subterranean church, divided into two spacious naves by a series of eight great piers, which carry crossing arches," and as having masonry of extraordinary solidity held together with great iron *spranghe*.

GIRLS AT THE FOUNTAIN

One thing I discovered as we drew up at that aqueduct after our tramp under the boiling sun, that, though it was not easy, under ordinary circumstances, to shake the equanimity of Miss Heriot, this walk had changed the charming rose of her complexion to an apoplectic purple, and as Mr. Witheridge jumped up, making futile grabs at the wild stocks on the artist's wall, she said quite snappishly, "Ralph, do keep still; you make one feel so hot." She was a little restored by the splashing of the fountain, which looked as if it had been repaired by a plasterer from Shepherd's Bush. It is built into the wall which carries the aqueduct, and standing in front of it, waiting their turn, were half a dozen of the graceful Taormina girls, some of them with their pitchers still balanced on their heads, others, with only the pads of white cloth which act at once as supports for pitchers and a kind of Egyptian head-dress, for showing up their bright peach-like complexions and great dark eyes. Miss Heriot began to think about the æsthetic aspect, and forgot the heat. And the pool of clear water fifteen feet long by four feet wide, like a Genoa washing pool, under the wall, looked very cooling.

IN SICILY

ON THE ÆSTHETIC SUPERIORITY OF ITALIAN IRONWORK

There was a charming Cupid on the quite modern ironwork, which set me wondering why the metal-work in our streets in England cannot be as artistic as it is in Italy. In the smallest towns in Italy the village pumps are æsthetic, and so, especially, are the brackets for the street-lamps. It would be a great thing if Mr. Mackenzie's School of Art Metal-work at Newlyn could enter into communication with some great firm of manufacturers of pumps, and street-lamps, and street-railings, and street-gratings, so that the moulds in which they are made might be decorative instead of abominable.

ASPHODELS AND SAGES

Though I have exhausted our walk I have not exhausted the flowers of Taormina. There is, for example, the sage which grows to be a shrub, and has large lemon-coloured flowers and the general effect of a calceolaria. There is the shrub which the natives call the *fiore bianco*, which has a white flower something the shape of a plumbago blossom. There is the omnipresent asphodel, which has been part of the heritage of poets ever since Homer sang of the meads of asphodel. Miss Heriot broke into the prettiest enthusiasm when she discovered that the most romantically named flower of her studies grew at every turn round Taormina. Two varieties grow at Syracuse, but I have only seen one at Taormina, the larger one, which has flat, rush-shaped leaves, almost like an iris, and, springing from the middle, a stem from two to four feet high, crowned with a splendid head of fragrant pink blossoms, shaped something like a gladiolus flower, and branching out like the Prince of Wales's feathers. They are of a delicate pink, veined at the back with a darker colour, and they are very fragrant. You can recognise honey made from asphodels as easily as you can recognise our moor honey at home. When you see a bank of them standing up against the clear, deep blue of the sky, there are few flowers which give a more superb effect. They are like a garden of lilies,

THE FLOWERS OF TAORMINA

only no ordinary lily grows in such luxuriance that you can see thousands of blossoms waving side by side, their fair pink hoods all humming with bees.

OTHER FLOWERS

Nature looks well after the bees in Sicily—their favourite candy-tuft grows in masses. The caper-plant grows at Taormina, but we were too early to see its blossoms. There were, however, some splendid beds of blue and white wild lupins waving in the breeze, as they grow round the deserted-looking fortifications of Antwerp in August. The pennypiece has its tall whitish-green plumes in March or April here, instead of July and August as in Devonshire. On the way up to Mola one finds splendid specimens of the warty blue grape-hyacinth, almost as large as the garden hyacinth, with which of course it has no connection. Various irises flourish round Taormina, and there is the usual wealth of borage, which in Sicily has its sky-blue blossoms as large as halfpennies, and which, curiously enough, even at a short distance off, has a purple rather than a blue effect. And there are bugles, mallows, cranes'-bills, and marguerites of huge size and with blossoms innumerable; but the Sicilian giant daisy is so infinitely finer at Syracuse than at Taormina that I shall defer painting its glories till I tell of our experiences in the city of Dionysius.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SICILIAN FUNERAL AND THE CLOISTER OF S. CATERINA

WE were standing one day by the quaint outside stairway which leads up to the watch-tower, to observe the charcoal-burners weighing out long sticks of charcoal on a sort of steelyard, when we suddenly heard Chopin's "Funeral March" played by a fine band, with the tread of many feet obbligato to it, coming along from the higher part of the town. A little afterwards the head of a funeral procession came into view. We waited in the Piazza S. Agostino to watch it emerging from the dark archway of that ancient *orologio*, and were rewarded with one of the most impressive sights I have seen. We took up our position well back, where we could see the huge dark form of Etna behind the mysterious white figures. The procession came along at a sort of slow amble, headed by the members of the Burial Guild, to which the deceased had belonged, dressed in their long white robes, white capes, and white head-cloths pierced only with two openings for the eyes. The same shape of dress is worn by all Italian *misericordie*, and burial guilds, only sometimes, especially at Naples, the white is varied with brilliant



A MEMBER OF A GUILD IN THE BOURBON
TIMES

From a set of water-colour paintings by Salvatore Petrucci.

A SICILIAN FUNERAL

colours. One man carried a great jewelled cross, and all the others smaller crosses of black wood, or tapers. The priest, dressed with a sort of lace fichu over his black robe, walked in the centre, while the novices swung censers, and all the population of Taormina, including the coastguards in their black kid gloves, fell in behind the corpse or thronged the doors and balconies, for the deceased was the principal inhabitant, not from offices he had held, but from his wealth and universal charity.

We were walking behind the coffin a little before it came to our hotel, when a most dramatic scene ensued. A young woman, very good-looking, had been crying her heart out in a balcony, and her friends were evidently on the *qui vive*. As the coffin approached she gave a wild leap to fling herself from the height of twenty or thirty feet on the flagged roadway before it. But her friends seized her in time, and held her back by main force. She had, it appeared, been his openly-acknowledged mistress, and nobody seemed to think the least the worse of her for it; people were too content to talk of his unflinching goodness to her, and the terrible loss his death meant to her. They are all one large family in these little mountain towns. The procession ambled on from side to side of the roadway like a Japanese funeral procession, stirred by the exquisite music, but, with the exception of that woman's, we did not read sorrow in any of the faces, only deep respect. The Sicilians, as I wrote in *The Admiral*, do not fear death, they only fear pain. In fact, they look at death very much in the same way as the poor Japanese do, life being a place where there is not always enough to eat; and where poor people cannot expect to get warmed in the winter, beyond their fingers and toes, with the *scaldini* or *hibachi*, or cooking-stoves with holes for handfuls of charcoal, which are their only fires; and where the heat of the summer day is a burden to those who must toil through it. I have often wondered whether the poor Sicilian takes in the Church's teaching on the subject, or simply regards it as *going out*, to use the fine expression of the handful of English who rule the millions in India, carrying their lives in their hands for fever and what not. On swept the procession, past the grim Corvaia Palace, which has

IN SICILY

seen every Tauromenian carried out to his last home for five or six hundred years, through the Messina Gate, past the church that was once a heathen temple and was re-dedicated to S. Pancras, the proto-martyr of Sicily, and down a rugged lane to the Campo Santo.

There our feelings experienced a shock. This was the most respected man and the greatest benefactor in the place, and his brothers of the Burial Guild to which he belonged were taking their last leave of him. They certainly took it in the oddest way. They did not wait for the body to be lowered into the grave, they hardly even waited for it to be set down, before they blew out their tapers, whipped off their guild dresses, lit their cigars, and stood about laughing and talking, or trotted off home in the most unconcerned way. It was reversing the old proverb—out of mind before out of sight. Miss Heriot was so pained that she cried—the only mourner at the grave.



A MEMBER OF A GUILD IN BOURBON TIMES
From a watercolor painting by Salvatore Politi

MY DESIRE TO OWN A FAMOUS PLACE

Not far from the Campo Santo is the Convent of S. Caterina. I much desire to be the owner of some supremely beautiful or historic spot, one that does not cost much. When I heard the other day that a gentleman from London had bought the Bolt Head for something under a pound an acre I was filled with homicidal yearnings. I had similar feelings towards the gentleman from Messina who had bought the Convent of S. Caterina at Taormina for £400. The convent is just across the road from the Castello-a-Mare Hotel. I had often noticed its cypresses in 1896, but I never went into it until

THE APPROACH TO S. CATERINA.

the close of our last visit. Then at once the Castello-a-Mare Hotel, which I had previously only regarded as having the best sea-view, became the most desirable place in my eyes, and in the eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Heriot, who accompanied us on that excursion, because it required so little exertion, and Mrs. Heriot was very fond of gardens. S. Caterina is private property, but that does not deter anyone who wishes to see it from going there, or half the population of Taormina from trying to turn an honest penny by taking you there.

THE APPROACH TO S. CATERINA

We were standing on the terrace of the Castello-a-Mare, looking down into the exquisite little cove of S. Andrea, where the English lady has bought an island, when a highly respectable citizen came up and asked if we should not like to see S. Caterina. I knew that that was a delicate way of making money, but, seeing that it was our object in making the excursion, we allowed ourselves to be captured, and followed him in a meek troop through the avenue of yews and



Photo by G. G. G.

THE PROMONTORY AND COVE OF S. ANDREA

IN SICILY

cypresses, which show the outside world that it is a religious house, and a garden where nespoli, peaches, almonds, giant geraniums, wicked-looking, rust-coloured irises, and great clumps of bamboos and prickly-pears were grouped round a stately *Ficus Rubiginosa*. They were woven into a tangle with a cornucopia of wild flowers. The asphodels were particularly fine. We could see at once that the place was in a starved condition, because the same pipe was used for waste water and the bell. The man, who had nothing to do with it or us, rang the bell of this private house, and went on tinkling it till someone came, while Mrs. Heriot picked specimens, a species of raiding in which Italians fortunately see no harm. We were admitted without difficulty through the convent gate and through the beautiful Sicilian-Gothic gateway at the other end of that cloister which is to be described below.

WE ARE ADMITTED INTO THE CONVENT

The girl took us straight to a tiny, old, brown terrace, with a big vine. The terrace was little more than the leads of the chamber underneath, with a low parapet, and it was an old, old vine, not good for grapes, perhaps, but with a famous knotty trunk and the promise of a thick roof of vine leaves for the simple arbour of the terrace. The view was beyond description, for you could see to the Faro of Messina one way, and to Cape S. Croce, almost to Syracuse, the other. You could see the snow on the mountains of Calabria from that little brown terrace overgrown with house-leeks and surrounded by an olive garden. Then she showed us the rooms, which looked dry and clean and certainly more comfortable than most convent cells. They were nice little vaulted chambers, more suggestive of a palazzo than a convent, and one rather larger, used for a sort of dining-room, had a mantelpiece in the style of a Roman temple, and a square kettle, which was fascinating. She took us then to the nuns' refectory, with a black-raftered ceiling, but was very unwilling for us to see the church, which she said was only used as a store-room. There was nothing stored in it but fragments of itself and bones. There

THE CLOISTER OF S. CATERINA

were skulls knocking about in the most unconsidered fashion. Mr. Witheridge took one or two and some bones. They were rather to his taste in curios.

THE CLOISTER OF S. CATERINA

Finally she permitted us to revel in the cloister, which was what we had gone to see, one of the most exquisite Renaissance cloisters in Sicily, almost more beautiful in a way than the cloister of the Filippini, which is used for the Museum at Palermo, for that is now crushed with an accumulation of architectural and sculptural treasures, and is so spick-and-span, while the cloister of S. Caterina has all the sweet disorder characteristic of a Sicilian garden, even of the gardens of the great, and the Botanical Gardens at the capital.

Imagine a little Renaissance cloister still perfect, with bold, round arches springing from columns with carved capitals, supporting a parapeted terrace mellowed with age. From the roof over the terrace rises a quaint little belfry, like an Elizabethan chimney-stack with an arch pierced through it for the bell. In the centre, round the well-head, is a little clump of lemon trees, and a wealth of creepers pours over arches and terraces. When we were there, there was such an air of the repose of ages, such a smell of violets



Photo by Condit.

CLOISTER OF S. CATERINA

IN SICILY

after rain, that Miss Heriot cried out, "Father, realise, and buy this, and let us live here on anything, if it is only a thousand dollars a year. Did you ever see anything so cute as that?" She pointed to the little arched doorway under the cloister in the ogee style dear to Sicilian-Gothic, with lava and tufa dressings, which look as if they had been put there on purpose to help the photographer. Presently, after trying the Italian, which she had been cramming up with Boston energy, on the servant girl, she said, "They do let bedrooms here, father, those rooms we saw upstairs, and they look dry enough and comfortable enough; why shouldn't we spend our time here?"

THE GARDEN OF S. CATERINA

Certainly it looked very delightful for people who, like the Heriots, were contemplating a three months' stay at Taormina to domicile themselves in this divine old convent, which seemed to have the sea all round it, as you get it in the pictures of naked boys lolling on seats of ancient masonry, which Crupi takes to give the tourist the idea of ancient Greece. I had great difficulty in getting the Heriot family away from the garden, though I could see that their almost Zoroastrian worship of the flowers was getting on Mr. Witheridge's nerves. Witheridge was *imprimis* an American athlete, who seems to have represented Yale in every athletic sport, and he went through all this, and Sicily generally, simply from the extraordinary docility which distinguishes the American man in his relation to his women-kind. It certainly was glorious, that garden. It dropped down the side of the hill above the convent, and over the marigold and asphodel crowned horizon of that little hill peeped the great theatre.

TOMBS, THE PRINCIPAL FEATURE OF SICILY

There were, I believe, tombs of some kind in the garden, but the ancient inhabitants of Sicily at all stages, Siculan, Phœnician, Greek, Roman, Lower Empire, and Saracen, spread their tombs about like pebbles on the seashore. They honeycombed, in populous centres, every cliff, every piece of masonry that was massive enough, with niches

THE GARDEN GATE OF THE CONVENT

about the size of an English coffin ; sometimes laid longways along the face of the wall, sometimes tunnelled into it from the front to the back, like the Saracen or Lower Empire tombs just below S. Caterina. The Normans, on the other hand, had themselves buried like the lords of mankind that they were. They had either a good slab with their effigy in armour reposing on it, or a solid sarcophagus, sometimes ancient, and sometimes made in the ancient form. The Normans who could not have decent tombs have gone back to the bosom of the Earth whose destinies they arranged. They have left no common chrysalis-cases behind them.

I did not examine those tombs below S. Caterina. I did not examine the Roman tombs stripped of their marbles which dot Mount Taurus above the convent at the back of the theatre. I did not even examine the Zecca, that mysterious brick edifice which was probably a tomb, or even the Roman sepulchre known as the Grotta di S. Leonardo, which Murray says retains traces of frescoes on its walls. I do not regret not having examined these tombs. I have examined such hundreds in Sicily, especially in places like Syracuse, where they have strong characteristics, and may be taken to belong to the period at which Syracuse played its great part. But I wish I had examined the little late Sicilian-Gothic church of SS. Pietro e Paolo, close by the garden of the Osservanti Brothers, in whose wall the Saracen tombs are bored, for Murray says that it contains some curious features, which he duly sets forth.

AT THE GARDEN GATE OF THE CONVENT

Close to the garden gate of S. Caterina, near a splendid mass of aloes, agaves, and cacti, oleanders and prickly-pears, asphodels, nightshades, and caper-vines, filled in with candy-tuft, is a great old bowl with a magnificent spurge springing out of it—probably it grew there by accident, and was left there intentionally ; while close by is another tangle of yellow genesta, pink anemones, and blue and white lupins, springing from a walled-in bank whose masonry has every chink filled with scaly spleenwort or flowering pennypieces. I do

IN SICILY

not know how we should ever have got away from that garden if Miss Heriot had not suddenly spied, coming up the hill, one of the gaily painted Sicilian two-wheeled carts, piled up like a hay-waggon with bags of flour, and baskets, which contained I know not what—they were quite satisfactory as baskets—on the top of all of which Crupi's favourite model for the reproduction of ancient Greeks lay fast asleep, with his beautiful classical head sheltered very little from the sun by the red stocking-cap of the country.

CHAPTER IX.

STREET SIGHTS IN TAORMINA AND TAORMINA GUIDES

THE SHOPS OF TAORMINA

THE shops of Taormina are not difficult to summarise. There are two pharmacies, which do their principal business in *cascara sagrada*, two photographers, a few curio shops, a few bakers, a would-be gambling-hell, a few drapers, and general stores of two sorts, both of them labelled *Diversi Generi*, which means different kinds. When you first go up the Corso you hardly get the impression of there being any shops at all, for the drapers have no counters in their dark basements, but, in Japanese fashion, pile their goods up from the floor; and the section of general dealers who confine themselves to selling produce and rough pottery, show hardly any stock at all, but merely hang a few broken or withered samples on a string across their doors; while the other kind of general—unless he combines with his business an agency for the sale of lottery tickets or a sale of the Government monopolies *sale e tabacchi* (salt and tobacco)—has for his stock only a pitiful handful of halfpenny note-books, watch-keys, and the small soap-and-comb trifles you get in similar shops in Japan.

PEDLARS

But this—the legitimate business—was spoilt by a variety of pedlars, who sometimes carried their wares themselves, but mostly walked beside a laden donkey or *carro*, the said *carro* being a sort of trolley drawn by a donkey orphan, very long, but only rising about a foot and a half from the ground. The knife-pedlar, who had a most

IN SICILY

extraordinary collection of clasp knives, some of which looked blood-thirsty enough for daggers, others as if peasants might have carried them in their pockets at the Sicilian Vespers, exposed his knives for sale on a slung tray such as the penny toy-sellers use who stand opposite our Law Courts. When he grew tired he took this off and displayed his wares in greater detail against the wall of the cathedral, just by the principal entrance. Sunday was his day in Taormina. I bought the quaintest-looking knives from him for sums varying from about twopence-halfpenny to eightpence. They all had savage points and really æsthetic handles of scratched brass, or scratched iron, in the form of a fish or horse or so on, but the horn handles tipped with brass were sometimes spoilt by being made in the shape of ballet-dancers' legs. The boot-pedlar also walked, and carried his wares slung on a bamboo suspended from his neck, which had the general effect of a cockatoo's perch. I have seen a Japanese peddling boots in just the same way, and wearing sandals himself. But the haberdashery-pedlar, though he seemingly walked with a pile of rolls of stuff on his head, and one displayed in each hand, was somewhat of a

fraud, for he had an extensive *carro* with more rolls of brilliant red and yellow stuff, and buttons, and tapes, and darning and knitting wools of extraordinary colours, and such small gear galore. The jar-pedlar and the hen-pedlar used donkeys. Being hung head downwards with your legs tied for hours and hours does not seem to affect a hen, but then they were probably born and bred in coops hardly bigger than themselves. Almost every humble house in Sicily, whether in town or country, has its coop



Photo by R. A. S. S. S.

THE JAR-PEDLAR'S SHOP

A CITY OF STAIRS

of hens, which is put outside the front door in the morning along with the dust-box—they do not aspire to bins.

The jar-pedlar's donkey made the finest show that mortal ass could aspire to. He carried dozens and dozens of jars, some of them nearly two feet high. I noticed that when the owner wanted a seat he made some freemason's sign to the donkey to stop, and taking the biggest jar from him, laid it on its side and sat on it. I cannot understand his having such confidence in his wares. The curio-sellers of Taormina have no more to do with the natives than the hotels have. They have their merits, but are concerned purely and simply with foreigners.

TAORMINA STREETS AND THE NAUMACHIA

Taormina is in brief a city of outside stairs, solid-fronted balconies, queer little lanes darting up and down under arches, broad sweeps of steps such as you get off the Strada Timeo or in front of the Ciampoli Palace, battlemented walls a few inches thick, desperately impoverished churches, each with some fine architectural detail, and boys begging round you with their eternal "Datemi un soldo," or "Questi sono antichita."

There is in the Strada Timeo, just below Crupi's, a wide flight of steps something like the approach to the Ciampoli Palace. You go down these if you want to see women spinning and netting, or if you are by any chance consumed with a desire to examine the nondescript antiquity known as the Naumachia. All sorts of theories have been framed about it, even the raised paven channels in the orchard have been laid under contribution to prove this and the other theory, but I can dispose of them at once, for the Marquis de Gregorio has exactly similar channels for irrigation in his lemon garden at Palermo; so they must have been added in very post-classical times, and the bricks of the Naumachia itself are not like the ordinary Roman bricks, nor do they bear the appearance of extreme antiquity.

OUR GUIDE

Nothing would satisfy Miss Heriot's Boston ardour for doing the lions of Taormina short of having a guide, and she deputed Don

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Pancrazio to procure her one. I felt sure that he would go himself. I had forgotten that he did not like walking, and when the guide turned up in the person of a small, and to say the least of it, slight,

but very sharp-looking boy, I determined to go with them to see what they would say to each other. Nominally I went to interpret for them. I am not a good Italian scholar, but I knew that I could do a deal more in the way of making him understand than Miss Heriot could. The guide, of course, could not speak a word of English beyond two or three parrot cries learnt for pestering the visitors when they did not wish to engage him.



Photo by Marziani

OUR GUIDE AND A LATE SICILIAN-GOTHIC DOORWAY

POOR ITALIANS WALK AS IF
THEY HAD NO INSIDES

Miss Heriot was a girl
with a good deal of natural

delicacy. As Don Pancrazio had taken the trouble to procure this guide for her, she did not like to say in so many words that he was not big enough. She merely wished that he would walk as if he had some insides; she complained that half the Italians, and especially the guides, walked as if they had none. She thought that they must eat beetle-powder or some new drug to dry up their insides, so that they should not feel hungry.

ETNA

IF YOU WON'T HAVE MOLA THERE IS ETNA

The guide, true to his instincts (the instinct of the Italian guide and cab-driver is always to want you to go to the farthest-off sight in the neighbourhood), began operations by saying that there was a better view from the castle, but he thought we ought to go up to Mola, because that was the best view of all. Miss Heriot did not want to go to Mola; she was perfectly aware that the beautiful rose colour with which nature had endowed her cheeks was much more becoming than purple, and she really felt the heat very severely. So by way of getting the guide back she asked me to tell him that the great object in sight-seeing is to say that you have seen the thing. I did my best, and of course conveyed something quite different, but the guide grinned from ear to ear, and, catching so much as that we did not want to go up to the mountain, he said, "Never mind, you have Etna with you all the time. He plays with you little tricks with the clouds."

We stopped a minute in the Piazza to gaze at Etna with its Fujiyama top, separated by a scarf of clouds from its great leonine shoulders. Etna always seems to me the most solitary thing in the universe, it is such a grand signor among mountains. Miss Heriot, being a Bostonian and enthusiastic, talked of "its peak riding in clouds of snowy glory," and said that to her it always mothered Sicily. She said it ranked with the clouds and carried on their line. The guide, who thought it was time to say something, said that everyone was having his siesta—the mountains, the people, and the sea. This was true. She had taken a perfectly useless guide at the very worst time of the day, directly after lunch. Southern cities for a couple of hours after the midday meal are like so many cemeteries, even the police take their siesta. Miss Heriot was vexed by the obvious truth of the guide's remark, and wished to hit upon some form of expression which would reach his intelligence. "Tell him not to talk such stupid facts, or he'll go below," she said at last.

I swore at him.

IN SICILY

THE FEAST OF S. VENUS

This put him on his mettle. He felt that he must tell us something more important, and mentioned that there would be a fête of S. Venus in three months' time, before the signorina left Taormina. All the natives in Taormina, of course, knew how long she was going to stay, and that the beautiful signorina was engaged to Mr. Witheridge, and that her father was a rich American, although he was staying at the artists' hotel, and everything else. I ventured to ask the guide if the Goddess Venere and S. Venera were not distinct personages, but he would not hear of it, and since we could not go to the castle or Mola, suggested that we should go to the Hotel Castello-a-Mare to see the view. He knew, of course, that we had been to S. Caterina; all the boys in Taormina knew which places each visitor had seen. They kept a kind of mental tally of them, so as to be able to offer to take them to all the places they had not seen. But certain things like the castle and Mola he thought we might visit twice, and he knew perfectly well that we had seen all the things which he knew the names of, and a good many more. He was at his wits' end to know where to take us, and the suggestion was the outcome of a flurry not usual in a Sicilian guide. "Tell him I don't want to go to the Hotel Castello-a-Mare," she said; "it looks so unscrupulously clean."

PALMS AND LA CACCIA

This was Miss Heriot's first experience of Sicily, which she had heard was a paradise of palms. "Tell him to show us the best palm gardens," she said. The boy gave a deprecatory shrug, "There are no wild palms, and only one or two tame ones, signor."

Bang! bang! went the barrels of a gun in a garden a yard or two from where we were standing.

"What is that?" asked Miss Heriot. She could manage so much in Italian.

"La Caccia," he replied.

"La Caccia!" she said to me—"the chase! In that place? Why, it is about ten feet square, with stone walls twelve feet high."

HOW THEY MEND THE ROADS

I explained that he only meant shooting, and that there was nothing left in Sicily to shoot except the very smallest birds, and that the Sicilians were very poor and did not consider lizards were worth powder and shot.

"Are they so very poor?" she said. "I told Ralph—Mr. Witheridge so, but he doesn't see how they can be when nobody is too poor to drink wine, smoke cigarettes, and carry a gun; and I thought he was serious, until he made the most atrocious pun I ever heard. He said that everybody knows it is a land flowing with milk and tunny."

OUR CONVERSATION WITH THE GUIDE

By way of passing the time I thought it might be possible to get the guide to tell us what the boys thought about in Taormina, but loyalty to his order, I suppose, kept him from disclosing any particulars of the slightest interest.

Miss Heriot said it was an absurd question to have asked him—that boys don't think, they only feel, and only that when they are hungry. It was not that the boy was incapable of answering questions; he could be very much to the point, for when, as we dragged the long length of the Corso heavy with its noonday slumbers, Miss Heriot asked him why there were so many boot-shops in Taormina, he said that the Italians wear many and cheap boots. At the same time he stirred a flutter in our breast by telling us that Taormina was sure to become a great place now because it had become a gambling-place. We had visions of a casino, and made eager inquiries; but he was only referring to the place a little further up the Corso, which had been a barber's shop, and now had the *petits chevaux* and the column and ball. The proprietor saw him pointing it out to us and rang his bell, but we were not to be inspired.

HOW THEY MEND THE ROADS IN SICILY

Shortly afterwards, however, we came to a man, and he was doing the same job that he had been doing ever since we went up before breakfast to catch the post. The Corso of Taormina, being the only

IN SICILY

real street, is paved with huge blocks of lava, and when a block gets too rutty for the carriages which drive you from the train and Giardini twice a day, the manner of replacing it is very Sicilian. A man is hired to chip out the offending block, which is, perhaps, eighteen inches square and six inches thick. As lava is very hard he can make this job last about a week.

THE CHIEF MODEL

The boy did not see anything funny in this; but, sitting on a step of the Fountain of the Four Beasts he spied the hoary old villain in the butcher's blue Eton jacket and matador breeches and cow-hide shoes, who takes all the old men's parts in Taormina photographs—Taormina people do not act in plays, but in photographs. He was disappointed that neither of us had a kodak. But at last he had shown us something, and considered that he had earned his fee handsomely.

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A FAORMINA BOY

FROM AN OIL PAINTING BY MARGARET THOMAS

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CHAPTER X.

TAORMINA—INFORMATION FOR TOURISTS

THE HOTELS

THERE are at any rate six hotels at Taormina frequented by foreigners, and varying in price from six francs a day, wine included, to double the price and nothing included. They are the Hotel Timeo, Hotel Castello-a-Mare, Hotel S. Domenico, Hotel Vittoria, Hotel Naumachia, Hotel Belvedere. The established favourite for the better-off traveller is the first. The food and attention are excellent, and it has a very fine position. The Hotel S. Domenico has been started only a few years, and the accounts I have heard as to its comfortableness vary, but there is no gainsaying its position, which is the finest in all Taormina, on a plateau jutting out from the mountains over the village of Giardini, and commanding superb views, as superb as the "Castello-a-Mare," while it is much more central, and situated in a splendid old convent, of which I have a good deal to say elsewhere. Of the other three the "Victoria," where the prices are from six to seven francs a day, according to the length of stay, wine included, is decidedly the most popular, though the late Professor E. A. Freeman, the greatest English authority on Sicily, made a protracted stay at the "Naumachia," and said that he was very comfortable there. I have never heard anyone recommend the "Belvedere," but have no personal knowledge beyond that its little esplanade commands a charming view. I am told that the Grand Hotel is also open now.

IN SICILY

EXCURSIONS FROM TAORMINA

As regards sight-seeing, Taormina is not a place from which you can attempt the ascent of Etna. Mr. Freeman, who was a fellow of my college—Trinity, Oxford—says that there are many delightful expeditions to be made from Taormina, but I was always deterred from trying to make them by that awful climb up from the station, though it was a fairly simple matter to scramble down the rocky path, which reminded me of the bed of a torrent, to the Giardini Station. What fools those Tauromenians be, not to have the funicular tramway between Taormina and Giardini! An expedition to Messina and Catania would be nothing then, and people would spend a fortnight or a month at Taormina, where they only spend a week now. Almost the only expedition which does not involve that climb down to Giardini is the combined expedition to Mola (p. 60), Monte Venere (p. 62), and the castle, and there is quite enough up-and-down climbing in that to satisfy the average man's craving for exercise.

THE SIGHTS IN TAORMINA

The great sight in Taormina itself is of course the Greco-Roman theatre (p. 15), and visitors should not omit to see the little museum of locally-found antiquities attached to the theatre. Off one side of the Strada Timeo (which leads to the theatre, and was, I hoped, named not after the hotel, but after the great classical historian Timæus, who was a native of Taormina) is the Naumachia (p. 111). At the end of the other side is the Piazza Vittoria Emmanuele, two faces of which are occupied by the theatre (Teatro Regina Margherita (p. 82) and the *carabinieri* barracks. The theatre was formerly the church, and the barracks the convent of nuns, known as the Badia Nuova to distinguish it from the Badia Vecchia, the most exquisite of the ruins of Taormina. Badia, I understand from the local guide-book, is a term which should never be applied to a monastery, but only to a nuns' convent; it is, in fact, a convent in our limited sense.

The Palazzo Corvaia is on the side opposite the theatre, and a

OUTSIDE THE MESSINA GATE

few yards down to the right from it is the Messina Gate. You go through the Messina Gate and turn up to the left to go to the castle and Mola, and pass, almost directly, the fine washing pool, and the saddest monument in all Taormina. When we were there in 1896 the tall wall fountain here was in exquisite decay, perfectly charming alike in colour and broken outline. When we came back in 1898 it was freshly stuccoed-up in the style of the Shepherd's Bush builder, the one Britishly vulgar note in Taormina.

THE SIGHTS OUTSIDE THE MESSINA GATE

There are a good many other interesting features outside the Messina Gate; there is, for instance, the tall oval-shaped foundation of ancient masonry of which the use is unknown. I asked the *octroi* man, the padrone, all the children, and half the priests in Taormina about it, and the utmost I could extract from them was, that it is known as the Rotondo. It is used now for drying washing on, and as Norma Lorimer wrote, "It is always washing day in Sicily."

A little below this is the church of S. Pancrazio, built out of the cella of a Greek temple, ascribed of course to Apollo Archagetes, the particular Apollo to whom the Sicilian Greeks dedicated their first coming to the island, and to whom they always sacrificed before paying a visit to their mother city in Greece proper. The most striking thing about S. Pancrazio is the fine masonry of the cella of the Greek temple from which it was improvised. The interior is not bad in its own rococo humble way. The priest was poor and ignorant, but he lit two dips on the altar with charming manners, and wound up the curtains in front of some pictures and of a black S. Pancrazio under a gilt baldachin. There was a marble font, and the priest was highly flattered by our photographing him.

The Campo Santo (p. 102) is a little below this. Returning to the Giardini Road, after passing the Zecca (p. 107) and some Roman tombs (p. 107), you reach in a few minutes the esplanade above the Hotel Castello-a-Mare with a glorious view over Cape S. Andrea (p. 103) to the classical Pelorus, and close by are the old convent of

IN SICILY

S. Caterina (p. 102) and the Saracen tombs (p. 107). These are the principal sights outside the Messina Gate.



Photo by Crupi.

SARACEN TOMBS

THE SIGHTS IN THE CORSO

Passing through the gate directly after the Palazzo Corvaia, you pass a beautiful little Renaissance church, much beloved by poor Tauromenians, and the small Greek theatre (p. 34). Between this and the Piazza of S. Agostino (p. 34), which is the centre of the town, you pass on the left a disused church with rather an elegant façade, curious little Gothic details on the house fronts, and just before you come to S. Agostino (p. 37), which gives the piazza its name, you notice some fine old details in a building now devoted to some charity. On the right-hand side of the street, between the little Greek theatre and the Piazza S. Agostino, you pass only the little Roman pavement next door to the Hotel Victoria, and the church of S. Giuseppe, which has nothing particular except the handsome double stairway in front.

SIGHTS IN THE CORSO

Passing under the Orologio (p. 39), or watch-tower (I am not making a pun), you pass on your left hand between it and the Fountain of the Four Beasts (p. 46) nothing much of note on the street except the Hotel Belvedere (p. 39) and the Palazzo Syroi (p. 39). On the right-hand side you pass almost immediately the beautiful double Gothic arch I have described (p. 39), the Palazzo Ciampoli (p. 50), and the Palace of Justice, which has at any rate an interesting and very beautiful staircase.

Right below, by the fountain itself, opposite the Duomo, is a palace with some beautiful windows, and in the palace immediately below this there is, I believe, one of the best courtyards in Taormina.

Between this fountain and the Catania Gate there is nothing of particular note on the Corso itself, but a few steps down lead you to the Palazzo S. Stefano (p. 54), which is on the whole the finest in Taormina, close to which, in the little lanes, are one or two very fine stone balconies and other splendid ancient details, while a little below this palace is the old convent of S. Domenico, now the largest hotel in Taormina.



Photo by Mazzanti.

GOthic DOORWAY NEAR S. AGOSTINO

IN SICILY

THE PORTA TOCA

Not many yards from the Catania Gate is the exquisite moresco Porta Toca, a curious gate-tower, with two elegant pointed arches at



Photo by C. C. C.

THE PORTA TOCA (CATANIA GATE)

right-angles to each other and a fantastic outside staircase and battlements. Look where you will at this gate, you are pretty sure to see a strong ass, with some extraordinary load, big enough for a hay cart, which has gambolled up the steep path from Giardini with the determination of a boy in a football scrimmage. From the Porta Toca there is a picturesque piece of the city wall running down a few hundred yards to another tower on the brow of the precipice, which acts instead of a fortification from here to the cross wall, which comes down from the castle by way of the Orologio.

OTHER SIGHTS IN TAORMINA

A little above the Porta Toca is a villa distinguished by a fine palm tree—one of the few in Taormina. This belongs to a rich Englishman, and is about the only house in Taormina which most Englishmen would think fit to live in. A path near here conducts you to the Badia Vecchia (p. 55), better known as the Badia. There are two other ancient monuments, to which I have forgotten to allude,

SIGHTS IN THE CORSO

on the upper side of the Corso. One is known as Lo Stagnone—the only remaining one of the great reservoirs which used to supply the city and the Naumachia; the other is the fine aqueduct (p. 96) which passes along just above the Messina Gate. There are many curious little bits, which the tourist will discover for himself, in the narrow arched lanes which strike up and down the hill from the Corso. The tourist will do well to explore all the back streets, for besides the interesting architectural details which they may contain, it is there that he will see the women spinning and making nets. There is a quaint little infants' school (p. 40) well worth looking into, almost next door to the Syroi Palace, and no one should leave Taormina without examining the little Sicilian garden of the Hotel Victoria and the almost inaccessible hermitage just below the castle. To these Murray adds the church of SS. Pietro e Paolo, of late Sicilian-Gothic, with some curious features. But this I did not see, nor can I recall the details of the convent of the Cappuccini, just outside the town, and the Addolorata in the town.



Photo by C. G. G.

CORTILE WITH FIFTEENTH CENTURY STAIRCASE IN THE
CASA LA FORESTA
NEAR THE PALAZZO S. STEFANO

IN SICILY

PLENTY OF BOYS, TWO PHOTOGRAPHERS, NO ENGLISH DOCTOR,
AND NO BANK

Taormina is infested with boys, who offer their services as guides for showing you any single object in the town. You give them a penny if you are very well pleased and a halfpenny if you are not. Any of them will be delighted to go to the castle or Mola for half a franc if you make the bargain beforehand. There is no guide in Taormina better than the boys; they know the different places by name, and the grown-up guides know no more. Taormina has two photographers—Crupi, near the theatre, who is one of the best photographers in Sicily; he has many photographs of Syracuse and Palermo and other leading places beside Taormina. Giovanni Marziani, son of the proprietor of the Hotel Victoria, is quite a good photographer, but Signor Crupi is phenomenal, especially in his platinotypes. There is no banker in Taormina, so you must take your money with you or rely upon your hotel-keeper to change your cheques. There is often a chaplain there, but hardly ever an English or German doctor, which is decidedly against it. Italian doctors are apt to bring their patient to grief, whether by recklessness or stupidity, and the two chemists in Taormina keep very few English patent medicines.

THE CARELESSNESS OF SICILIANS ABOUT MEDICINES

As an instance of what one may expect from Italian doctors and chemists, I may quote what happened under my own observation in another Sicilian city. A lady was suffering from erysipelas and a native doctor was called in. He wrote a prescription for her, which was very likely excellent, but he did not grasp her name, so it was made out in the name of the landlady. Another English lady, while he was there, wanted some solution of arnica for a bruise; he did not grasp her name either, so he put down the arnica, on the same paper as the prescription, to be sent to the landlady. The two bottles arrived. They were both taken to the lady who was suffering from erysipelas. She could not read what was on either of the bottles, and

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THE GATE OF THE GODS (PORTA TOCA)

FROM AN OIL PAINTING BY MARGARET THOMAS

Vol. I. *Plates* pages 174

THE HOME OF THE GODS

drank off the solution of arnica, making herself, of course, horribly ill. She did not console herself with the fact that she might have been the means of a great discovery being made. Fancy if arnica had proved a rapid cure for erysipelas !

TAORMINA SHOPS

There is no bookseller in Taormina, and the drapers and stationers are exactly like the drapers and stationers in the small Japanese towns. The curio-sellers in the Strada Timeo are, I consider, no better or worse than might be expected, and have a few rather fascinating bits to sell.

TAORMINA, THE HOME OF THE GODS

Taormina has been called the home of the gods, and if, as the author of *Sicilia Illustrata* maintains, Sicily, not Greece, was the cradle of Greek art and Greek religion, the gods would certainly have lived at Taormina or on the top of Etna. But Zeus must have found Mongibello (Mount Mountain), as the natives reverently style the great volcano, though good for the divine privacy and also for the launching of thunder-bolts, a little out of the way for his favourite sport of mixing familiarly with the affairs of men and women.

But Taormina, always the haunt of pleasure, a kind of watering-place from the earliest times, he could have used as a sort of *villeggiatura* from Etna, where he could sit, with the cities of Sicily and Italy at his feet, amid the vintagers, and with the sound of the sea near enough for even human ears.

There is something divine about Taormina still. Its beauty is not of the everyday earthly kind ; its fantastic mediæval architecture by all rights should have fallen in the dust long ago. It has no backbone of mediæval solidity ; it does not seem to have been built by architects ; it seldom obeys the rules of the architecture of any age ; it looks as if it had been created by a genius of the lamp at the whim of an Aladdin.

CHAPTER XI.

TAORMINA TO SYRACUSE

OUR LAST NIGHT AT TAORMINA

WE were sitting in the salon after dinner, with the lamplight making shadow-maps on the ceiling out of the tall bunches of dried reeds and palms. There was to be a regular exodus from the hotel the next day to Syracuse, for which we were perhaps partly responsible, as we had been describing the glories of our 1896 Sicilian tour to Syracuse, Girgenti, Palermo, Monreale, Segesta, Selinunte, Marsala, Trapani, and Eryx. We were all going through Don Giovanni's photographs for the last time, to purchase any Taormina favourites we had left out, and all the decent pictures he had of Syracuse, where the local photographer has not taken above half a dozen views.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SYRACUSE

Miss Heriot was looking through the Syracuse photographs with us, and was enchanted with the splendid, sweeping Greek theatre there, and the tree-hung abysses of the Latomia.

"Why, there's a hotel on the very edge of the Latomia!"

"Certainly; that's the hotel we are going to—Madame Politi's Villa."

"Look at that, mother. We must go to Syracuse."

"May I look, sir?" asked Ralph Witheridge, when Mr. Heriot too had examined it.

"Yes," he said, after a close examination, "that's bully. We might do that sort of thing in America." Mr. Witheridge was not

A DAUGHTER OF BOSTON

aware that this was the place where the seven thousand Athenian captives suffered such extremes of heat and cold and starvation amid the jeers of the cruel Syracusans. He referred to the vegetation with which the sides of the Latomia were clothed. "Yes, we ought to go there," he continued. "Say, what is this?" He had taken up a picture of the River Anapo, with a tall *barca* forcing its way between the overhanging plumes of the papyrus.

"That's the papyrus."

"The papyrus! Say, sir, we really ought to go there."

"Yes, we really ought, Ralph. But I can't ask mother here to move yet. Those fakeeny fellows—those porters—have quite upset her. I don't know that we shall go anywheres else here, except Taormina."

Miss Heriot's bright face lost animation distinctly. She was a most devoted daughter to her parents; but she was also a typical daughter of Boston, as eager for the *aliquid novi*—novelties, especially ancient novelties—as any Athenian in St. Paul's congregation.

It was clear that she would give anything to see the glowing Greek and Norman monuments of Sicily, but that she did not mean to sacrifice her mother. She had in her hand a picture of the lofty fortress of Euryalus outside Syracuse, the one Greek castle which has come down to us, and that inspired her to a forlorn hope.

LA FEMME PROPOSE

She got up and whispered to her mother. Her mother's whisper back was audible. "Stephana, dear, you could never ask them." She replied with buts—we could not hear a word, but her heightened colour and her eloquent eyes told us that she was saying "buts."

If Mrs. Heriot had been an English mother, we should have overheard her saying "No" right out, or at best, "Well, I'll talk it over with your father." She did not say either, but merely, "Well, I don't see how you can ask them."

When her daughter came to look round, she found that my wife had gone to bed. So she turned to me, as I sat sorting photographs.

IN SICILY

"Will you take a message to your wife from me?"

"Certainly, Miss Heriot; what is it?"

"Well, I'd rather not tell you here; I might blush at my own impudence."

As nearly everyone in the hotel was crowding round for a last look at the photographs, it was not exactly the place to divulge anything of a private nature. "Where shall we go?"

There was not anywhere to go but the landing, where Don Zaro had his office, or the garden, for the chief priest and the chief of the *carabinieri* had come in for a late supper *à la carte*. Possibly they had been running in couples, on some errand of mercy.

The *mise en scène* was sentimental enough for anything—the quaint Sicilian garden, with its fantastic plaster-work white in the moonlight, and its blossoming orange-trees, as a background for Miss Heriot, charmingly pretty, and blushing at her own boldness.

AN ADDITION TO OUR PARTY

But whatever sentiment attached to the meeting was not for me. She merely wanted to know if my wife would mind her attaching herself to our party. She would be no trouble, she said; Mr. Witheridge would take her out all day. It was only, it appeared, that she might have a sort of portable home. Being American she saw nothing the least odd in Mr. Witheridge's going to the same hotel—only if it was full was he to have a room out. It was clear that she anticipated no remonstrance from her parents, except from their unwillingness to give us trouble. It was the kind of trouble one very easily puts up with. Personally, I regretted that it was only for Syracuse.

Before we went to bed everything was settled. Miss Heriot, as her mother said, was perfectly capable of sitting up all night to pack her trunks if she had no day to spare for it. Mrs. Heriot meant to console herself by taking off her husband to stay at the Hotel Castello-a-Mare, so that she could spend the day in sitting about her beloved S. Caterina.

THE MOTHER CITY OF SICILY

TAORMINA TO SYRACUSE

It is not part of my plan to describe what I did not see, and what I scamped past in seeing I shall scamper past in writing. All down the coast from Taormina to Syracuse is, of course, classical ground, great in history and greater in literature.

THE MOTHER CITY OF SICILY

The very first thing you pass is what was Naxos, the mother Greek colony of Sicily, and is now a lemon grove containing some stray foundations; and you seem to spend about half the journey between Taormina and Catania in company with the rocks of the Cyclops—the boulders which Polyphemus threw at Ulysses in base revenge for being blinded. I am not going to describe them, because I have not visited them, but the largest of them is quite a thousand yards in circumference, and seems to have been used for habitation very soon after Polyphemus had left off throwing it. This, as Witheridge said, gives you an idea of the size and strength of Polyphemus. Naxos was founded in 735 B.C., just after Rome, and the year before Syracuse. It got its name because it was founded by adventurers from the island of Naxos; and the shrine they raised on the shore to Apollo Archagetes was for centuries a pilgrimage place to every Sicilian-Greek who was going to or coming from the city in Continental Greece, which was the “metropolis” of his own Sicilian city. After temporary subjection on one or two previous occasions to Gela and Syracuse, Naxos was finally razed off the face of the earth, in 403 B.C., by Dionysius, the Syracusan, for siding with Athens in the siege of Syracuse. Dionysius did things in a wholesale way. He grubbed-up—to use a bush and backwoods expression—its walls and houses, and sold its citizens as slaves. And when they straggled back again, fifty years later, they were afraid to build on the unprotected shore, and founded their new city on the mountain above, known in ancient times as Mount Taurus. They did not even call their city Naxos, but Tauromenium, which is hardly disguised in the modern Taormina.

IN SICILY

To the hunted exiles from Naxos entrenched upon Mount Taurus came a great man—Andromachus, the father of the historian Timæus—the Timeo after whom the things are called at Taormina. By 358 B.C. he had become their tyrant, and they had become a powerful community. So wise and beneficent was his rule that he alone of the tyrants of Sicily was left in power when the austere republican Timoleon invaded Sicily to drive out the younger Dionysius. Taormina is, I believe, the only city founded on a mountain by the ancient Greeks. Eryx and Egesta (Segesta) were not founded by Greeks, but Elymians, and Solous (Solunto) was Phœnician, while Entella was founded by the aboriginal Sicanians.

The ancient city of Acragas (Girgenti) was down on the plain by the temples, not on the mountain-top. The Greeks were essentially traders; they built their Antwerps in prominent positions on the coast, and fortified them as strongly as the position admitted; but to fortify a precipitous mountain like Castrogiovanni struck them as labour lost. They had no wish to maintain a precarious independence in the mountains, like the Sicanians and Sikels. It is a curious fact that the sites of the ancient Greek cities in Sicily are mostly just the parts that are free from brigands. Brigands are able to hold out for the same reason that the aborigines held out—the wildness of the mountains of the interior. The Syracusans alone of the Sicilian Greeks had the forethought to secure their border by establishing outposts in the mountain-cities of the Sikels, which threatened their territory, such as Enna—the modern Castrogiovanni.

I do not know if Timæus was ever tyrant of Tauromenium, but he seems to have been driven out of the city in the year 310 (by which time his father must have been dead) by Agathocles of Syracuse, who took the precaution of banishing all his enemies before he crossed over to Africa. Timæus seems to have taken his exile quite cheerfully; he went to Athens and lived there more than fifty years, dying at the age of ninety-six. He spent most of that time in writing his huge history of Sicily from the earliest times to B.C. 264. The thirty-eighth volume is mentioned, but there were probably many more, though all except a few fragments perished.

CATANIA

He wrote also other voluminous works. Polybius, according to Sir William Smith, maintains that Timæus was totally deficient in the first qualities of an historian, as he possessed no practical knowledge of war or politics, and never attempted to obtain by travelling a personal acquaintance with the places and countries he described—that he had so little power of observation that he was unable to give a correct account even of what he had seen. But now the opinion prevails that the loss of his history is irreparable, because he narrated myths and legends exactly as they were current, instead of attempting to rationalise them.

I have no doubt that it would be fascinating to examine the Saracen castle of Calatabiano, and Roger the Catalan's great mediæval castle, which has conferred upon Acicastello its name. And if there had been that funicular from Taormina town down to the station at Giardini, I have not the least doubt that I should have made pilgrimages to both. But, as it was, I saw no more of either than could be seen from the train, and they were just incidents in a swift kaleidoscopic view, along with the fair new snow on Etna, and the golden fire of the *trefoli*, the Sicilian weed, and the lemon groves, and the convent-like farms, and the blue fields of flax, and the rocks of the Cyclops, and the black lava which was run into the sea for Catania to stand upon.

CATANIA

I shall not keep the reader long at Catania; I do not like Catania, although I recognise that it has its points. Miss Heriot, who was new to Sicily, was fascinated with the way in which all the streets seem to end in Etna, and with sundry pottery shops and public gardens. But then, of course, she was new to Sicily, and if she and Mr. Witheridge had been fumbling on their marriage tour instead of protected by us, I have no doubt they would have stayed at the hotel at Catania—the hotel, which gives itself airs and charges London prices, and is altogether what a Sicilian hotel should not be. Of course Etna is very much in evidence at Catania. It has

IN SICILY

smothered Catania ever so many times, all except the cathedral, and man has taken up its work there, and smothered the ancient masonry in plaster and domes, and other things which belong to what the public school boy called the Roman Catholic style of architecture. The Greek theatre was smothered by Etna, and dug out again, what there is of it, in the unsatisfactory sort of way practised at Herculaneum.



Photo by Couper.

THE GREEK THEATRE AT CATANIA

What you see is only of antiquarian interest. Of other antiquities there are the remains of the Castello; an ancient red granite obelisk standing on a black lava elephant; the poor back of the cathedral; a few built-in remains of the Roman Odeum; the exterior of the roof of S. Maria Rotondo; the faint traces of an amphitheatre; a Roman bath under the church of the Carmelites, another under the cathedral; a Roman tomb in the grounds of S. Maria di Gesu; and a white marble Norman doorway, built by Comacine workmen, let into

THE STREETS OF CATANIA

the poor Renaissance exterior of S. Carcere. This, though very much knocked about, is about the best antiquity in Catania—that unhappy thing, a Sicilian city built according to French ideas, with broad streets, which leave its inhabitants to be frizzled up by the Sicilian sun. The sun smites Catania in summer, and the snow-laden winds in winter.

THE STREETS OF CATANIA

Catania has fine streets, but they are cosmopolitan rather than Sicilian, or even Italian; and I think, on the whole, that bad taste is more rampant here than anywhere in Sicily. The cathedral is a little plastered S. Peter's, which is saying something very unkind; the great, bold Spanish balconies, which might otherwise be handsome, rest on what should be called Cupidatids rather than Caryatids—the ridiculous kind of cherubs that sixteenth and seventeenth century Italian painters introduced into everything—altar-pieces and villa ceilings, in the same way as people in the suburbs now use Japanese fans. The principal streets of Catania are undeniably fine, but the plaster-work is so unpleasantly florid. It reminds you of servants' Sunday dresses, and though Catania is such a new town, and so robbed of any kind of interest by the indiscriminate use of the new broom, the plaster of even the main streets is quite neglected enough to have tall weeds—a snapdragon, three or four feet high, perhaps—growing out of cracks.

Everything is Bellini at Catania—they have a Piazza Stesichoro, and something or other Bellini; and the Teatro Massimo, which is really a very fine building, constructed of dark red stone, reeks of Bellini.

In the length and width and straightness of its streets Catania resembles Melbourne, or perhaps, having in view the mountain at the end of the street, Geelong. Really the best thing about Catania is the vegetation in the public gardens; this is rich, and has quite a plausible effect of the tropics, because Catania is, as Sicilian cities go, rich.

IN SICILY

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE POTTERY SHOPS OF CATANIA AND SYRACUSE

I did not share Miss Heriot's enthusiasm about the pottery shops, because I saw that all the best pieces of that rough Sicilian pottery, which is so wonderfully elegant, were Syracusan; and I did not like the Catania style of pottery shops, which were warehousey things near the port, as they are at Naples, and even at Palermo for the most part, instead of the pottery shops you get at Syracuse, which are wholly delightful. The large warehouse shops, for one thing, always demand double as much from a foreigner as they would from a native, and try to choke you off bargaining with an air of *you-needn't-take-it-if-you-don't-want-it*, while at the style of shop you get in the Rotondo at Syracuse bargaining is a fine art, which you are expected to practise. The shopkeeper there has nothing to do except to sit down and wait for his infrequent customers, and the fact of having a foreigner in a shop is a distinct draw for native customers. Foreigners are not so common in Syracuse as to be taken for granted in the humble shops which flourish (or languish) on the Rotondo. These shops, too, exercise a fine variety in their callings. The Rotondo, which is outside the Dazio Consumo, the octroi of Syracuse, is, in the first place, a kind of market to supply provender for man and beast. The beast has to pay for his drinks like a man. I don't know how much it costs to have a bucket of water drawn for your horse, or mule, or ass. Some very small coin, a centesimo, which would be worth the tenth part of a penny if it were not debased, is, I daresay, made to do duty twice. At the same shop you may buy tall sheaves of green forage for your beast, and bread and wine, and jars to carry your wine in, made in shapes which were very likely current when Dionysius was tyrant of Syracuse and the Peloponnesian War the topic of the day. I shall have more to say of this Rotondo when I am writing on Syracuse.

CATANIA IS ALL SULPHUR

In Catania you do not see many of the yellow two-wheeled carts, painted with scenes from the Bible or Tasso, which you get

THE FACCHINI AT CATANIA

in Palermo. The two-wheeled carts I noticed were mostly un-illustrated, and they were not so numerous by any means as long, low, horse trollies, six or eight feet long by two feet wide, with all four wheels the same height and of a luggage-train pattern, which remind you irresistibly of *dachshunds*. They all seem to be carrying sulphur. Catania is very sulphury, and is not fit for much else, in spite of its situation on the rich skirts of Etna. The streets are full of these sulphur wag-gons, the goods station is full of sulphur trains, the steamers tied to the quay by their tails are being filled with sulphur, and there are sulphur stains along the cracks of the rusty lava upon which Catania is built, wherever it is exposed, as it is near the sea.



Photo by Pelos.
THE ILLUSTRATED CARTS OF PALERMO

THE FACCHINI AT CATANIA

Anyone could tell that Catania was a business place, because the *facchini* are so rampant and extortionate. For some reason, only known to the Rete Sicula, trains do not run through from Taormina and Syracuse, although there is a straight line all the way. They kick you out at Catania and make you wait about an hour, and then put you in again at exactly the same point of the platform, and the *facchini* want you to pay twopence for every package they lift out and twopence for every package they lift back—a distance of six or eight feet, perhaps. This is of course too much; they are only allowed to charge a penny each way. As we were lifting out our small traps on our arrival, the *facchini* came up with the very finest Sicilian manners; they did not like to see the illustrious strangers doing their work. Of course they did not, at the rate which

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they expected to receive for it. Fourpence for lifting a kodak out and in is remunerative pay in a country where an unskilled labourer gets from fourpence-halfpenny to ninepence *a day*. Between us, I daresay we had about twenty little packages, so when we were installed in the train for Syracuse I gave the *facchini* a couple of francs for doing absolutely nothing that we could not have done ourselves, and for less than five minutes' employment. They demanded eight. "Fetch a tariff," I said. The tariff was of course in some office, and the man had taken the key. "Never mind," I said, "call that *carabiniere*." There were two of these representatives of the majesty of the law a few yards off. *Carabinieri* always go in couples. Tweedledum and Tweedledee both marched up and saluted. I said we wished to see the *facchino's* tariff. They told him to fetch one, and he produced it from his pocket, not in the least abashed by what he had told us a minute before. It appeared that he was entitled to a penny for every small article which he lifted in or lifted out, twopence for the twofold operation. Still, this was better than fourpence, and made it a drawn battle. Witheridge was distinctly disappointed at its ending so tamely, and said, "I shall keep my eye on Catania."

CABS AT CATANIA

Having got our baggage duly arranged I thought there was no better way of spending that enforced hour at Catania than in driving the new-comers round the city. Now, cab-driving in Catania, by the Course, for those who live in it, is cheap—threepence for the drive, irrespective of distance, so long as it is inside the city walls. But there is an extra charge for driving to the railway station, and by the hour it costs five times as much as by the drive. Still, as that meant only thirteence-halfpenny between us, it was not ruinous, and we drove Miss Heriot round to see the nakedness of the city, and managed to get her back to the train again with not more than three large wine jars, which she could have bought for half the price directly we got to Syracuse.

THE PLAIN OF CATANIA

THE PLAIN OF CATANIA

Catania may be a fairly prosperous city commercially, but it is not much of a place to live at, for it has the lava of Etna hanging over its head and the worst air in Sicily rising from the plain at its feet. Nearly all along the line from Catania to Augusta the road runs through an avenue of blue gums. This is always a bad sign, and in all the wide plain of Catania there is hardly a house. But it has a beauty of its own, for its cornfields are rich with purple Sicilian anemones, corn-marigolds, poppies of an almost crimson scarlet, Canterbury bells, huge crimson sainfoin, bright blue flax and borage, vetches of all the colours of the rainbow, magenta wild gladioli, tall asphodels, campions, wild snapdragons, and yellow irises. Almost anything will grow in Sicily, and almost anything which will grow in Sicily will grow in the plain of Catania, and though if you went by the absence of houses it is not easy to conceive anything more deserted, at the times of the year for tilling you see long rows of half-naked, swarthy people stooping in the wheat-fields, for all the world like Japs in a paddy-field thinning out the rice. Indeed, when Etna has its outlines mistified with clouds, you might easily imagine that this vast monolith mountain, which is one hundred miles round, was the queen of mountains, Fujiyama herself. Or, if you turn your back on Etna and note the low rim of mountains which rise like the rim of a crown round the other sides of this plain of Ceres, you might well be at Kyoto.

When we passed, that day, it was not tilling-time, and there was not a human being to be seen outside the railway stations except one solitary man riding at snail's pace on a mule, with his cloak enveloping himself and his mule like a portable shower bath. And the straw wigwams made for shelters in that houseless land only added to the desolation of the scene. The one human touch in the landscape was the well that appeared at regular intervals with Archimedes's picturesque apparatus for raising water attached to it. There are a few olives and prickly-pears in these cornfields, but the only real break to the skyline is the mournful avenue of eucalypti with their sinister suggestion.

IN SICILY

THE ONLY COCKNEYS IN AUSTRALIA

At Bicocca, the station outside Catania where Syracuse-bound people from Palermo and Girgenti get into the train, we saw one of the funniest sights we have seen in Sicily. A large, stout, florid, marvellously attired courier, who knew no more English than the boys who worry you in the streets at Taormina, was taking a couple of Australians to Syracuse to catch the connecting steamer to Malta, where they were going to pick up their Australian steamer. I did not know that such people existed in Australia. I don't think I ever saw any all the years I was there. They were just rich Cockneys of the most unredeemed vulgarity, who by some accident had gone to Australia and remained there, and remained Cockneys there, and made a fortune. They were as stout as the courier, and the woman was as marvellously dressed. The man was like any other vulgar Australian tradesman, in a yellow silk coat and a sun helmet. Their vulgarity was not of an Australian kind, but, as I have said, they resided there; their children were not with them. If they had any, I daresay they were lean, active Colonials, the girls dressed like Parisians, and the boys keen, horsey men, but *cælum non corpus mutant* was the motto of the parents. They could not of course understand a word of Italian, nor, I think, could they understand a word of the courier's English, but he had taken their money from them and bought tickets and tipped and kicked the porters, and, in spite of the fact that I was travelling with a second-class ticket, came to my window with a fandango of deference, when he heard me jabbering away in my pigeon Italian, to know if I would make two or three explanations to his charges. I forget what the explanations were, but they were of the order of telling them that they must get into the train, or something else which did not need much explanation to a practical Colonial, for though the old couple could not understand the courier's Italian or his English, they knew their way about. Instead of coming the more obvious way, overland to Reggio and across by the ferry to Messina, being perfectly good sailors, they had taken the steamer from Naples to Palermo

CATANIA TO SYRACUSE

and had a good night's rest, in a better boat than any which runs between England and France. But as for Sicily they did not think about it, it did not interest them in the least. They did not care twopence for the Norman-Arabic glories of Palermo or the classical glories of Syracuse. They regarded Sicily simply as a stepping-stone between Naples and Malta, where they had hired a four-cabin for the use of their two selves. They were dreadful old vulgarians, but the courier did not seem surprised at anything except their not being able to understand him. He said that mail-boat passengers never did look at anything except the Villa Landolina and the Ear of Dionysius, but some went the picnic up the Anapo, and that he would show us all round Syracuse. I had my own opinions about that. He was foolish as well as a dragoman.

CATANIA TO SYRACUSE—THE CITY AND HARBOUR OF AUGUSTA

We soon forgot him as the train glid past the Lake of Lentini, with its blue waters and its red sedge, and Theocritean scenes of shepherds and goats on Theocritean hills, and women washing in the river. Anon we came to orangeries; arcaded cottages under broad Kentish-looking roofs; oxen with huge wooden Gladstone collars; asphodels making a sky-line on every ridge; Archimedean wells as big as Martello towers; rocks and bays like Torquay; and such a blue, blue sea, with Etna across it, and a charming little castle by the shore. On this big blue bay, almost surrounded by sea, stands Augusta (near the ancient Megara). It is very Eastern looking with its palms by the water. Its principal features are a mediæval fort and salt pans. I suppose it is unhealthy, because there are hardly any houses in the country round. However, healthy or not, there are generally one or two monsters of the Italian fleet lying in the splendid harbour, which is so near to Syracuse that one great fortress of the Portsmouth order would embrace both, and if Italy ever became a first-class power she doubtless would establish a tremendous fortress on that rocky tableau between two seas once occupied by ancient Syracuse.

IN SICILY

OUTSIDE SYRACUSE

At Priolo, nearer Syracuse, there are some very old prickly-pears. To me an old prickly-pear is a wicked-looking thing; it seems to leer like a goat. Soon we saw the blue bay in which the Athenians first lay between Thapsos and Tyche, which is bounded by white limestone cliffs. Thapsos has a monument, but is now abandoned to tunny fishing. I could not get Miss Heriot to attend



A BARCA UNDER SAIL
From a photo by Mr. R. B. Cozzani

to Thapsos, for there was a very grand *barca*, painted all the colours of the rainbow, with one of the peculiar spritsails that they use. It seemed to be showing off just for our benefit, though, of course, its owner was unconscious of our existence. She woke up a few minutes afterwards, when we had our first view of Syracuse rising from the sea in a nest of grey walls like S. Malo, walls which an hour or two later, at sunset, looked as golden as the temples of Girgenti.

SICILY IN VIRGIL

The truth was that she had not read so much as a crib to Virgil, who ends the Third *Æneid* with a sort of itinerary from Augusta *viâ* Syracuse, and round the south and west coasts to Trapani.

"And lo, the north wind, commissioned from the narrow seat of Pelorus, comes to our aid. I am wafted beyond the mouth of Pan-tagia, *fringed* with living rock, the Bay of Megara, and low-lying Tapsus. These Achæmenides, the associate of accursed Ulysses, pointed out to us, as backward he cruised along the coasts that were the scene of his former *wanderings*. Before the Sicilian bay out-stretched lies an island opposite to rough Plemmyrium; the ancients called its name Ortygia. It is said that Alpheus, a river of Elis, hath hither worked a secret channel under the sea; which *river, disem-*

SICILY IN VIRGIL

boguing by thy mouth, O Arethusa, is now blended with the Sicilian waves. We venerate the great divinities of the place, as commanded; and thence I pass the too luxuriant soil of the overflowing Helorus. Hence we skim along the high cliffs and prominent rocks of Pachynus; and at a distance appears *the lake* Camarina, by fate forbidden to be ever removed; the Geloian plains also appear, and huge Gela, called by the name of the river. Next towering Acragas shows from far its stately walls, once the breeder of generous steeds. And thee, Selinus, fruitful in palms, I leave, by means of the given winds; and I trace my way through the shallows of Lilybæum, *rendered* dangerous by *many* latent rocks. Hence the port and unjoyous coast of Drepanum receive me. Here, alas! after being tossed by so many storms at sea, I lose my sire Anchises, my solace in every care and suffering."

Pelorus is the faro of Messina. The name Pantagia is preserved in S. Panagia, several miles nearer Syracuse, the well-known tunny-fishing station. Tapsus is the Island of Thapsos, in the shelter of whose low-lying causeway the Athenian fleet lay when they first came to Syracuse. Acragas is Girgenti; Selinus is Selinunte; Lilybæum is Marsala; and Drepanum is Trapani, three of which are still the principal cities of their coasts, while Gela is mixed up with the modern city of Terranova, founded by the great Emperor Fred. II. Camarina, like Megara Hyblæa, is unrepresented by a modern city. The Cape of Pachynus is the modern Cape Passero, but the name is preserved in the little town of Pachino.

I have not thought it wise to overload my pages with minute topographical references to the *Odyssey* or the *Æneid*, or even to the history of Thucydides. Virgil had only a surface acquaintance with Sicily; but he is valuable as indicating to us the places visited by travellers in his day, though he was very mischievous in distorting ancient legends to make them fit into his court poem, the *Æneid*. Virgil, for instance, makes the Cyclopes, who in Homer were shepherds in the south-western corner of Sicily, inhabit the coast between Messina and Catania. In the *Æneid* he leaves them shepherds, but in the *Georgics* he makes them metal-workers, Etna of course

IN SICILY

being their forge. Æneas in the Third *Æneid* goes into the harbour of Catania, which is described as "ample, and undisturbed by the access of the winds," the truth of which anyone who has been in the port of Catania when a sirocco is blowing will recognise. But he clearly had no acquaintance with that coast, for he makes no use of the highly picturesque islands of the Cyclops.

PART II.

SYRACUSE

THE GREATEST CITY OF OLD GREECE, AND ITS MARVELLOUS RUINS—
PLATO'S HOME IN SICILY



Photo by C. G. G.

THE ISLAND OF ORIVEIA—MODERN SYRACUSE

A view from the Villa Politi. In the foreground is the Latomia, a quarry in which the Athenian captives were confined.

CHAPTER XII.

SYRACUSE

THE NEW LANDING-PLACE FROM THE EAST

IF it be true that Brindisi is to be abandoned for Marseilles by homing P. and O.'s, it behoves the Anglo-Indian to look out for fresh woods and pastures new wherein to break the journey home to England. That is to say, if he means to go as far as England; for an increasing number of Anglo-Indians find an Italian summer the pleasantest European change. Sicily has much to offer in either case. For on the one hand its most interesting and beautiful places are almost without exception non-malarious, and on the other hand it now lies so directly in the path of the homeward-bound traveller from the East. Instead of getting off his liner at Suez, and having quite a voyage to Brindisi or Venice, he goes on to Malta, and thence a good and fast mail boat carries him to Syracuse in a few hours.

Once at Syracuse, if he is feverish for mountain air, he can get to Taormina between lunch and dinner, but if he is not he will do wisely to linger at Syracuse itself.

THE GREEK REMAINS AT SYRACUSE

There are few places which have so much to offer the intelligent traveller as Syracuse, for you have monuments equal in interest, if not in preservation, to those of Athens itself, combined with the exquisite vegetation of which Athens is almost as devoid as Aden. Moreover, at Girgenti, a hundred miles or so to the westward, there are temples vying with those of Athens and Paestum in their perfect-

IN SICILY

ness. The crowning interest of Syracuse is its historicalness ; it is one of the few cities which can boast that in its heyday it was the greatest city in the world. You can see, beyond a shadow of doubt, the sites of the Athenian lines and of their last great fights by land and sea, before they surrendered *en masse* and brought about the ultimate surrender of their own city to the hated Spartan. The Greek theatre on which the Syracusans stood to witness the supreme struggle and triumph of their city would be almost as perfect as on the day of the great fight if its stage and the seats for the aristocracy had not been plundered of their marbles. The seats of the people, protected by the worthlessness of their material, and the whole groundwork of the auditorium are perfect.

THE LATOMIA IN WHICH THE ATHENIAN PRISONERS WERE CONFINED

But there is another and a more ghastly monument of that duel *à l'outrance* between Syracuse and Athens. Tradition is practically unanimous in identifying the quarries in which so many thousand of the confined Athenians perished of heat and hunger and cold and fever with the Latomia dei Cappuccini, which stretches beneath the old Cappuccini Convent and the road up to ancient Achradina. It would be worth while going to Syracuse if it were only to see its latomias, especially this one, for they must be seen to be realised.

Imagine a lake half a mile long, and very narrow and winding, and studded with little rocky islets. Imagine the shores of the lake and the islets to be precipices running sheer down for a hundred feet. Imagine little bridges thrown from island to island, and island to shore. Imagine the water, after it has honeycombed the precipices which formed the shores into vast ramifying caverns, to have been drawn off and its bed planted with a rich Southern garden, with groves of almonds and lemons, and olives and nespoli; and the grey limestone precipices of its sides hung with masses of golden ivy and clematis and all manner of other creepers, and sending forth from every ledge and crack huge silvery bunches of vermouth and crimson masses of glorious wild stock. That may give you some faint idea of the

MADAME POLITI'S GARDEN

Latomia itself, surrounded by silver-white, creeper-hung limestone precipices, hiding in their depths mysterious caverns, in which the hapless Athenians strove to shelter themselves from the fury of the midday sun and the chills and dews of night, and to give their dead the decent interment which had an almost Oriental significance to the ancient Greek.

It was old even in Cicero's day. He says in his *Verres* :—

“You have all heard of the Syracusan Lautumiæ. Many of you are acquainted with them. It is a vast work and splendid; the work of the old kings and tyrants. The whole of it is cut out of rock excavated to a marvellous depth and carved out by the labour of great multitudes of men. Nothing can either be made or imagined so closed against all escape, so hedged in on all sides, so safe for keeping prisoners in. Into these quarries men are commanded to be brought, even from other cities in Sicily, if they are commanded by the public authorities to be kept in custody.”

When you have taken in the history of it and the most subtle part of its beauty there is more to come of the latter, for Madame Politi, the widow of the famous guide upon whose accumulated knowledge the guide-books of modern Sicily are based, has surrounded it with one of the most delightful gardens I ever saw.

MADAME POLITI'S GARDEN

Ever since she bought the land round the Latomia, some time back, it has been her one idea to give the great monument a beautiful and sympathetic setting. The Latomia itself she could not buy, for it has been declared a national monument, but she has been given the complete use of it, and a private stairway down to it, the only entrance hitherto having been a sloping terrace down from the Cappuccini Convent. First of all she built a parapet all round the top, a low parapet of rough plaster and rough masonry, just sufficient to keep visitors from falling over the precipices, and so cunningly built that it looks like part of the original rock. All round this she had laid out her garden, leaving the rich wild flowers, for which Syracuse above all Sicily is famous, as undisturbed as the

IN SICILY

masses of rock in which you can see the hardly worn niches once filled with Roman inscriptions. Only those who know Sicily and Syracuse can have any idea of the glory of the wild flowers—the huge white and lemon-coloured daisies; the tall pink asphodels, branching out like the Prince of Wales's feathers; the brilliant blue borage, with flowers as large as pennypieces; the rich crimson wild stock and wild gladioli; the bright little scarlet adonis; and the broad purple anemones, not to mention a hundred others. In among the tangles of wild flowers she has planted palms and yuccas and agaves, and the garden shrubs and trees best adapted. Round the convent are vines and huge bushes of rosemary, on which the laundress dries her linen without any thought of the aroma, and in front of the Villa Politi are the finest stocks I ever saw, filling the air with rich, tender fragrance.

THE VIEW FROM THE VILLA

From sunrise to sunset the lights are always changing in the Latomia. You can never tire of peeping over the parapet into its inscrutable depths; and at sunrise and at sunset, especially the latter, the view across the abysses and past the old yellow convent and the one tall stone pine over the sea to Syracuse is one never to be forgotten. The island of Ortygia, the least of all the five divisions of ancient Syracuse, but the only one which has survived, is still surrounded by its ancient, sea-washed ramparts, and the narrow seaway between its castle-crowned end and the cavern-hollowed opposite shore, which the Syracusans blocked against the egress of the Athenian fleet, is all but invisible, though across the city you can see the Great Harbour of antiquity and the table-topped, honey-bearing hills of Hybla.

The villa is now a hotel, and I know of none so uniquely situated.

HOW TO SEE SYRACUSE

Syracuse is a place where you can spend any space of time. In a single day you can see the latomias and the most splendid of the classical remains. In four days you can see pretty well everything

PLAN OF SYRACUSE

superficially, and in a week fairly well; but if you are content to live amid beautiful scenery and vegetation, and occupy yourself with excavating in a small way on your own account, amid half-explored ruins, and elucidating topographical problems of ancient classical



THE PLAN OF ANCIENT SYRACUSE: A LOW-LEVEL GIBRALTAR

From a Plan in "Russell's Tour through Sicily, 1819"

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. The Great Harbour of Antiquity. | 9. The Temple of Minerva (Cathedral). |
| B. The Small Harbour of Antiquity. | 10. The Temple of Diana. |
| C. Ortigia (the Island) | 11. The Amphitheatre. |
| D. Neapolis | 12. The Greek Theatre. |
| E. Epipolae | 13. The Street of Tombs. |
| F. Tyche | 14. The Latomia del Paradiso and Ear of Dionysius. |
| G. Achradina | 15. The Catacombs. |
| | 16. Remains of Ancient Sewers. |
| | 17. Latomia dei Cappuccini, where the Athenian prisoners were confined. |
| 1. Plemmyrium. | 18. Aqueduct. |
| 2. Temple of the Olympian Jove. | 19. Remains of an Ancient Castle. |
| 3. Fountain of Cyane. | 20. The Latomia del Filosofo. |
| 4. The River Anapo. | 21. The Castle of Euryalus. |
| 5. The Arsenal of Dionysius I. | 22. The Walls of Dionysius. |
| 6. The Fountain of Arethusa. | |
| 7. The Castle of Maniace. | |
| 8. The Chain across the mouth of the Great Harbour which trapped the Athenians. | |

IN SICILY

history, you will find Syracuse a paradise where you can spend a whole winter or summer. No one will interfere with your excavating, and over on the opposite shore of Plemmyrium you will find an almost unexplored field full of traces of the ancient life.

THE FIRST DAY'S ITINERARY

Taking four days as the ideal time for the man in a hurry to devote to Syracuse, I would say devote the first day to seeing the vast, perfect, and inimitably situated Greek theatre; the Roman amphitheatre; the Ara, the great altar of stone on which once a year they sacrificed a hecatomb of 450 oxen to commemorate their deliverance from Thrasybulus; and the ancient Necropolis and Street of Tombs, of which some, like the so-called tomb of Archimedes, are very fine, and others recently opened are yet full of bones and pieces of pottery, to which you may help yourself. With these may be taken the ancient Roman cistern, known as the Piscina, which looks more like a subterranean church; the Latomia del Paradiso, containing the Ear of Dionysius, a prison in the shape of a human ear, from which every sound transmitted itself through a narrow orifice into the tyrant's chamber; the Latomia di S. Venere, with its exquisite vegetation; and the Villa Landolina. This is all you can do in a day comfortably, but when you are pressed for time you will press more into a day, and very likely go to examine the old Norman church of S. Giovanni, which has below it the subterranean church of S. Marcan, the most ancient in Sicily, where S. Paul himself is said to have preached; and the famous catacombs of Syracuse, which are among the best in Sicily; winding up with the Latomia dei Cappuccini (in the hotel garden) where the Athenian prisoners were confined.

THE SECOND DAY'S ITINERARY

The second day you can devote to making the expedition up the River Anapo, said to be the only place in the world where the Egyptian papyrus now grows wild. There is a regular avenue of it for about a mile, ending up in the thirty-foot-deep blue spring of the Fountain of

HOW TO SEE SYRACUSE

Cyane. On the way there you trace the route the retreating Athenians took, marked by the two lonely columns of the temple of Olympian Jove. Both in this trip and the other it is advisable to take your lunch with you if pressed for time. There is always an almond tree to sit under at Syracuse, surrounded by waving green corn or a deep flowery meadow. If you have any time when you come back, you can devote it to the ancient church and the tomb of S. Lucia, and the Cappuccini Convent, which is now the Lazaretto.

THE THIRD DAY'S ITINERARY

The third day can be devoted to Syracuse itself, with its castle older than the Norman Conquest; its fine Sicilian-Gothic palaces—the Montalto, the Bellomo, the Lanza, the Daniele, the Miliaccio; its fine Renaissance palaces—the Bosco, the Lantiere, and Leon d'Or Restaurant; its little old churches; its splendid cathedral, which embodies an entire heathen temple; its museum; its ancient ramparts; the Fountain of Arethusa, with the fine Marina lying between it and the Porta Marina; the ruins of the Temple of Diana; and the ancient aqueduct.

THE FOURTH DAY'S ITINERARY

The fourth day would be devoted to the Castle of Euryalus, which is a good way out, and the ancient Palæstra or Ginnasio, of which the ruins are very extensive and very beautiful, in addition to being about the most perfect of their kind. If you go by way of the Palæstra on foot, you return by way of the Wall of Dionysius and the Scala Greca. I have by no means exhausted the lions of Syracuse; it would not fall within the scope of this chapter to do so. I should have detailed less had it not been my desire to point out the inexhaustible interest of the place. And after you have sampled Syracuse, a moderate journey carries you either to the mountain paradise of Taormina, which, being quite close to Messina, is a good starting-point for Italy, or to Palermo, which is yet more inexhaustible in its interest, and where, with proper introductions, you can see something

IN SICILY

of smart Sicilian society, in its grand old palaces full of ancient hangings and furniture. From Palermo, a better steamer than any you get between England and France takes you to Naples in a single night.

OUR ARRIVAL AT SYRACUSE—THE USUAL SCENE AT A SICILIAN RAILWAY STATION

No sooner did the train draw up in Syracuse than the fat courier bustled up to our window, saying, "I'll take care of you," though I should have thought that he had enough on hand with his two large dumb, human charges and their extraordinary luggage. I thought the *conduttore*, who was standing like a peri at the gate of the station, with "Villa Politi" in gold letters on his hat, would do quite well. I also knew that if time was going to be of any consequence we should have to do most things for ourselves. Madame Politi, the kindest of hostesses, had sent a couple of carriages for our party, so that we should not have to wait for the omnibus; but the *conduttore* felt that he was too great an ass to get our registered luggage without us, even when we had given him the checks, so we had to kick about the station for the best part of an hour while the train undigested the luggage, amid the usual pandemonium which reigns at Sicilian railway stations of any importance.

At last our luggage was all on the omnibus, and even then the *conduttore* seemed unwilling that our carriages, which were to contain no one but ourselves, should start until he had arranged the omnibus to his satisfaction, but I told our cabbies that if they did not start we would get out.

THE ROAD FROM THE STATION TO THE VILLA POLITI

They started with an ill grace, and then flew like lightning past the Rotondo with its forage and pottery shops; past the ancient Agora of Syracuse, which the cabbies call "The Roman Temple"; past long rows of women who had just got out of the ditch in which they did their laundrying, and were picking their babies (suspended in

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SYRACUSE

shawls) and their washing off the trees to tramp home; past a few cottages, with all their inhabitants making their homes outside the door, like the Japanese (work ends at sunset); past a calm bit of sea with low cliffs; past a long bank covered with the Beard of Jove whose bright magenta flowers were closed and lost amid the fleshy leaves; and almost up to the doors of the grand old



Photo by the Author.

WOMEN LAUNDRYING IN THE DUTCH

fortified convent of the Cappuccini. We turned into a garden just short of this, and whipped round rather an uninteresting road to the long, low Eastern-looking villa which Madame Politi has built at the head of the Latomia which was the prison of the Athenian armies.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SYRACUSE

I shall not describe this now, though I was interested to notice the effect on Mr. Witheridge and Miss Heriot. Mr. Witheridge's remark, when he saw the noble limestone precipices losing themselves between masses of creepers and the dark olive gardens and lemon groves below, was, "This is more the sort of thing we get in America." He seemed pleased, and to think that Syracuse, to use one of his phrases, "was doing itself well." He said that it was quite a canyon; but when Stephana, Miss Heriot, stood on the terrace of the quaint, Southern-looking villa, waist-deep amid clumps of broad white daisies and stocks, whose crimson blossoms were as large as pen-wipers, and filled the whole air with their fragrance, she saw not only the canyon,

IN SICILY

which was so full of poetry and romance to her—though it was nothing but a first-class canyon to him—she saw the whole wonderful picture, the fateful Latomia or canyon below; the glorious sub-tropical garden in which it formed a kind of waterless lake; the mediæval convent beyond; and beyond that the sea and the golden city which was, and is, Syracuse—only a part of ancient Syracuse, it is true, but still a site connected by an unending chain of the lives of ordinary men and women back through the Middle Ages, and the Classical Ages, to the far-off and misty time when Syracuse was beginning her baby existence on the shores of the African sea, and Rome hers on the seven little hills which rose above the marshes of the Tiber.

It was then that she made me feel very old. "What do you think of it all, Miss Heriot?" I asked.

"I—I think you had better call me Stephana, if I am going to be a member of your family for a couple of months."

"What would Witheridge have to say to that?"

"I told him."

"And what did he say?"

"He said he thought that Miss Heriot was rather a mouthful to call out every time you wanted to draw my attention to anything."

"Then he approves?"

"He is not given to expressing his approval more directly; and you know, as the English say—"

"Know what?"

"That in America we don't promise to obey our husbands before we marry them."

"Well, Stephana, what do you think of it all?"

"I think I never knew what history meant till this minute, when more than two thousand years are bridged over by seeing the very scenery which their eyes must have rested upon whose doings inspired the first real historian. Oh, I can't express myself—but I am living in the past."

DOLCE FAR NIENTE AT SYRACUSE

THE WAYS OF SICILIAN SERVANTS

We found Mme. Politi's new villa carried on in the old simple fashion which made the Hotel Politi in the city so charming. The Sicilian servants still did things their own way. But it was of no consequence. There is no time at Syracuse except for the one boat and the few trains, and it was interesting to watch the servants doing things their own way. The cook, for instance—a very handsome young fellow—liked to skip into the dining-room and carve or wait on occasion. The waiter liked deciding what people should eat and drink better than waiting, and the waitress, who was also the cook's wife, had her likes and dislikes. However, Madame Politi was always about herself, and she treated the most transitory guest as she would treat an old friend.

DOLCE FAR NIENTE AT SYRACUSE

And the villa, and the garden, and the view are so delightful; and there is always sun and always a breeze, and always Etna, if you go on the roof of the house, rising from the plain with the grace of Fujiyama. Witheridge said it was good enough for him, and that is exactly the sentiment of the other Witheridges, wealthy trotters round well-known hotels, perhaps because, as he said, it is the kind of place you like to fool around, smoking and watching the lizards on the sunny terrace, or raking out skulls and exploring caverns in the Latomia * according to the temperature, and taking drives after lunch to the ruins. People like Witheridge forget that there is such a place as modern Syracuse, for they do not pass it on the road to the railway station. The bulk of them go away without ever entering its walls, and imagine that Syracuse consists of the ruins and the Villa Politi, instead of being an episcopal city and an important military command.

* As the word *latomia* (pronounced *latto-mee-a*) will occur so constantly, and has, I think, received no proper comment in recent books, I must say a few words about it. It is, I daresay, the most ancient word, not a proper name, which has always been and still is in familiar use. It was used in its forms *latomeion* and *latomion* by Strabo, born 61 B.C., and in its parallel form *litholomia* by both Herodotus, born 484 B.C., and Thucydides, born 481 B.C. It simply means a place where stone was cut, from *lithos* or *laas*, a stone, and *temnein*, to cut. In its Latin form, *lautumiae*, it is used by Plautus, Cicero, and Livy. Varro uses the actual word, *latomiae*. He says, "The prisons of Syracuse are called *latomiae*," and applies the word to the prison at Rome usually called the Tullianum. Cicero uses the word *lautumiae* as we use *latomia* to-day.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM THEOCRITUS TO NEWMAN

SYRACUSE AN EASY PLACE FOR SIGHT-SEEING

SYRACUSE is an easy place for systematic sight-seeing ; so many of the principal sights lie in groups, that when you have once walked your mile or two you find yourself with more than you can see in a day within a few hundred yards. Or you can take a cab to some central point—say, for instance, the Greek theatre—and tell the man to call back for you in so many hours' time. The Roman amphitheatre, the altar used for hecatombs, the ancient Necropolis and the Street of Tombs, the Nymphæum, the Greek-looking Roman reservoir known as the Piscina, and the Latomia del Paradiso are all within a stone's-throw of it and each other ; and the Norman church of S. Giovanni, with the early Christian church of S. Marcian and the Catacombs stretching away from it underground, the Villa Landolina, and the Latomia di S. Venere lie between the theatre group and the Villa Politi ; while the scanty remains of the ancient Agora, the Palæstra (Ginnasio), and the picturesque modern Campo Santo may be taken on the way to or from the Castle of Euryalus ; and the remains of the temple of Olympian Jove may be taken on the Anapo trip.

The intelligent visitor could go to the Greek theatre group every day for a week without exhausting the pleasures of sauntering and sitting about as his fancy dictated ; and this is of course the real way to enjoy such a unique remnant of the ancient world.

SYRACUSE IS STILL THEOCRITICAN

And when the enthusiast over classical remains has seen all the sights of ancient Syracuse set forth in the guide-books, he can have

SYRACUSAN PEASANTS

many another day of deep interest in wandering over the rocks of Achradina and Epipolæ, tracing out the foundations of ancient buildings and mastering the topography of the war between the Athenians and the Syracusans, or noting the remarkable similarities between the rural Syracuse of Theocritus and the rural Syracuse of to-day. Nowhere in Sicily can he see the rural life of the island better, for round Syracuse there is no fear of brigands. He can wander where he pleases, and the peasants, for the same reason, live in the country near their work, instead of sleeping in the town. I have never yet been able to spend the summer in Syracuse, but I look forward to doing so. It is too dry to be malarious, and too windy to be overpoweringly hot, and it must be infinitely more beautiful when the vines are hanging with grapes, and the town is gay with awnings, and the people are living their free summer life.

How like the surroundings of Syracuse to-day are to the surroundings described by Theocritus those who visit Syracuse will recognise at once when they read the Introduction to Mr. Andrew Lang's delightful translations of Theocritus:—

"Theocritus was probably born in an early decade of the third century, or, according to Couat, about 315 B.C., and was a native of Syracuse, 'the greatest of Greek cities, the fairest of all cities.' So Cicero calls it, describing the four quarters that were encircled by its walls,—each quarter as large as a town,—the fountain Arethusa,



Photo by the Author.

SYRACUSAN PEASANTS

IN SICILY

the stately temples with their doors of ivory and gold. On the fortunate dwellers in Syracuse, Cicero says, the sun shone every day, and there was never a morning so tempestuous but the sunlight conquered at last, and broke through the clouds. That perennial sunlight still floods the poems of Theocritus with its joyous glow. His birthplace was the proper home of an idyllic poet, of one who, with all his enjoyment of the city life of Greece, had yet been 'breathed on by the rural Pan,' and best loved the sights and sounds and fragrant air of the forests and the coast. Thanks to the mountainous regions of Sicily, to Etna, with her volcanic cliffs and snow-fed streams; thanks also to the hills of the interior, the populous island never lost the charm of nature. Sicily was not like the overcrowded and over-cultivated Attica; among the Sicilian heights and by the coast were few enclosed estates and narrow farms. The character of the people, too, was attuned to poetry. The Dorian settlers had kept alive the magic of rivers, of pools where the Nereids dance, and uplands haunted by Pan. This popular poetry influenced the literary verse of Sicily. The songs of Stesichorus, a minstrel of the early period, and the little rural 'mimes' or interludes of Sophron are lost, and we have only fragments of Epicharmus. But it seems certain that these poets, predecessors of Theocritus, liked to mingle with their own composition strains of rustic melody, *volks-lieder*, ballads, love-songs, ditties, and dirges, such as are still chanted by the peasants of Greece and Italy. Thus in Syracuse and the other towns of the coast, Theocritus would have always before his eyes the spectacle of refined and luxurious manners, and always in his ears the babble of the Dorian women; while he had only to pass the gates, and wander through the fens of Lysimeleia, by the brackish mere, or ride into the hills to find himself in the golden world of pastoral. Thinking of his early years, and of the education that nature gives the poet, we can imagine him, like Callicles in Mr. Arnold's poem, singing at the banquet of a merchant or a general—

“ ‘With his head full of wine, and his hair crown'd,
Touching his harp as the whim came on him,
And praised and spoil'd by master and by guests,
Almost as much as the new dancing girl.’ ”

CLASSICAL ATMOSPHERE

We can recover the world that met his eyes and inspired his poems, though the dates of the composition of these poems are unknown. We can follow him, in fancy, as he breaks from the revellers and wanders out into the night. Wherever he turned his feet he could find such scenes as he has painted in the idyls. If the moon rode high in heaven, as he passed through the outlying gardens he might catch a glimpse of some deserted girl shredding the magical herbs into the burning brazier, and sending upward to the 'lady Selene' the song which was to charm her lover home. The magical image melted in the burning, the herbs smouldered, the tale of love was told, and slowly the singer 'drew the quiet night into her blood.'"

THE CLASSICAL ATMOSPHERE AT SYRACUSE

It is not only to ancient buildings that the classical student can look forward as such a rich treat at Syracuse: it is to the atmosphere of ancient Greece which appertains here more than anywhere else except at Athens and Girgenti. Places like Olympia in Greece or Selinunte in Sicily do not count, for they have no modern cities round them; you could not live at them. But here and at Athens and at Girgenti there are cities, and at each of them fortunately the classical monuments lie for the most part apart from the modern town.



Photo by Alinari.

HIERO II., THE PATRON OF PHILOCRITUS
IN THE CAPITOLINE MUSEUM, ROME

IN SICILY

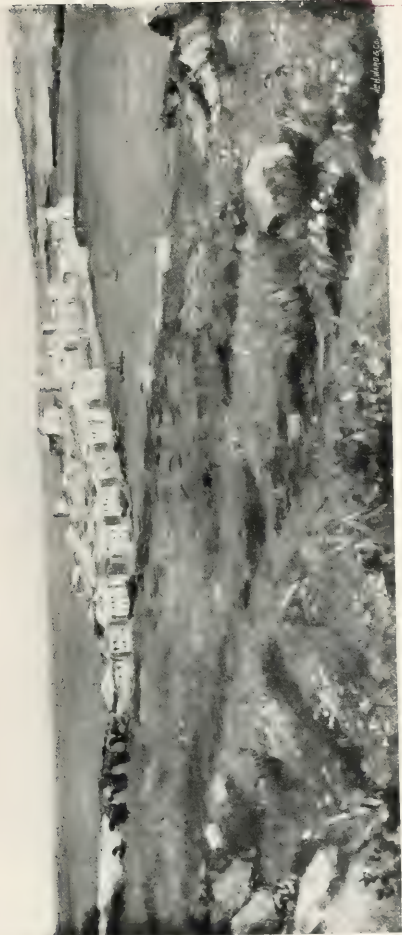
SYRACUSE, ATHENS, AND GIRGENTI

But Athens being a capital has also other matters to think of, and the stranger keeps Girgenti, which on account of its past evil reputation he considers the abode of savages, as far as possible a thing apart from himself. It is only Syracuse which is at once living on its Greek past, and a human thing which you can take to your heart. I love the quaint old mediæval town of Syracuse, minding its own insignificant business within its narrow island walls, in a way, almost as much as I love the remains of Syracuse the Great—Syracuse the Greek, lying embosomed between its rocky plateau, its deep, flowery meadows, and the sea—the Great Harbour of antiquity. But it is of Syracuse the Greek that I shall speak first, and naturally I shall begin with the famous Greek theatre.

And here I must put in a word of explanation. It is not a mere matter of chance that so many splendid monuments are found so close together; both the Greeks and Romans were in the habit of grouping their sacred buildings round some central point, the centre not necessarily, as in modern cities, being in the heart of the city, but equidistant from the various quarters. Here, at Syracuse, the sacred buildings were mostly outside the walls, at any rate until the Temenites was walled in during the Athenian War. Henry Kendall, the great Australian poet, in his most beautiful poem longed for "one spot secure from change": he might almost have found it at Syracuse.

GLOBE-TROTTERS AT SYRACUSE

I say almost, for from Kendall's own Australia and from India there are many wayfarers who leave their ships at Malta and take the swift packet which transports them in a few hours to Syracuse, whence, with the short breaks at the Straits of Messina and Calais, the train can hurry them to England. Sometimes they stay at Syracuse for a few hours or days, sometimes they go straight into the train and commence the four days' whirl to London. In either case these well-to-do English, with their smart trunks, present almost as strong a contrast to the real Syracuse as the Underground Railway



CONTRACTS, THE GREAT

CONTRACTS, THE GREAT, showing the Great Britain, its ships, its docks, its harbors, and the sea, the Great Britain of antiquity.

FROM AN OLD MAP, BY MARGARET DE WYLL.

Vol. I. 100 pages, 100.

GLOBE-TROTTERS AT SYRACUSE

could, or the Great Wheel. Syracuse provides a couple of hotels of the proper standard for them, both belonging to Madame Politi, and a supply of voracious *facchini* to prey upon them at the railway station, but otherwise concerns itself with them very little. The cabmen, too, perhaps regard them as a harvest, for these transients do not know the modesty of Sicilian cab-fares. If they see anything of Syracuse it is a judicious selection taken from the Greek theatre and the Roman amphitheatre, the papyrus beds of the Anapo, the Fountain of Arethusa, the Latomias, and the garden of the Villa Landolina. Not more than about one in a hundred sees the cathedral, which is really the most perfect of all the monuments of antiquity at Syracuse, because an entire temple has been built into it, and this temple, supposed to have been dedicated to Minerva, is extremely ancient, belonging to the sixth century B.C. The mediæval city—which is exceedingly quaint and full of artistic beauties—they never dream of entering. It does not lie on their road from the station to Madame Politi's hotel on the city walls. And if, as is generally the case, they go to her villa on the Latomia of the Cappuccini, the odds are about a hundred to one against their setting foot in the town of Syracuse; it does not lie on their way from the station or the steamer, and the cabmen do not care about the city, they like to drive to the gate of the Latomia del Paradiso—their Paradise, where they can sit about and gossip to each other while the visitors run up a good bill at so much an hour, for there are several sights within walking distance of this point which they assure their prey are of first-class importance. They are of first-class importance, but not of "first-class" importance than twenty other things at Syracuse. However, the visitors enjoy themselves immensely, and do not know that they are paying three times the fare, and do not miss the money, which is most acceptable to a poor Sicilian cabman, who does a great deal of waiting for a very small wage. These people have nothing to do with Syracuse except to bring the much-needed money to it, and in making Syracuse a possible place for well-to-do people to break the voyage at, Madame Politi has conferred the greatest benefit on the city.

IN SICILY

THE BOOK ADDRESSED TO GLOBE-TROTTERS

It must not be taken from what I have said that I am antagonistic to this class. On the contrary, their passing through Syracuse made it much more enjoyable to me, and it is to them above all others that I address this book. I do not pretend to exact knowledge of Sicily, that can only be gained by a residence of years. I simply try to show how interesting I found Sicily, and to persuade the chance visitor to spend more time there, and enjoy multifold attractions which he or she has not suspected. I should not like to write a visitors' book on Tuscany, because I know that about half the people who go there have studied it, and know more about it than I do. But the English people who go to Sicily are not, as a rule, students; they are simply breaking a journey from the East, or people of leisure doing a little mild globe-trotting, and I may be competent to help them to see more than they would otherwise see in Sicily.

SYRACUSE A SUNSET CITY

Syracuse is a sunset city. I do not mean by this to imply that the noonday sun does not beat very fiercely on the flat roofs of Ortygia and the bare, sirocco-swept rocks which were the foundations of the other quarters of ancient Syracuse. But my words have a double signification, because the sun has for ever set upon the greatness of Syracuse, and because every evening when the glowing orb of day sinks towards the honeyed hills of Hybla, the city is transfigured to the spectator who stands upon the mainland, especially if he stands where I stood almost nightly, on the rocky platform which was once Achradina, with one foot as it were in the past. Standing there, if I turned my back on the sunset city, and the streak of blue water, and the shadowy recesses of the Latomia which lay between, I was confronted by a spectacle yet more beautiful, though to me, with my passion for historical association, of less moment—Etna bathed in evening pink and gold.

GREAT MEN WHO HAVE VISITED SYRACUSE

ETNA AND FUJIYAMA

I do not think that from anywhere—not even from Taormina—can Etna be seen to such advantage as from Syracuse, especially if the spectator pulls out from the little harbour towards the coral caves on the way to Augusta. For Etna comes down and dips the hem of her trailing robes in the sea as Fujiyama descends to the blue Hakone Lake, and the curves of their proud skirts can only be compared to the head of a palm tree inverted. Fujiyama is the more graceful of the two, and Etna the more imposing. One can imagine the gods of the East and the gods of the West using them as their earthly seats.

GREAT MEN WHO HAVE VISITED SYRACUSE

Syracuse has had more than her share of the great ones of the earth—more, that is to say, if you look at the Syracuse of to-day, shrunk back to its original island limits, but not too many for a city which was, in its hey-day, the greatest in the world. It is at Syracuse that we meet after his fall Ducetius, the one prince of the ancient Sikel race, who founded a kingdom in Sicily; and Æschylus, Pindar, Plato, Pyrrhus, Marcellus, Scipio Africanus, and Cicero, are a goodly company of the

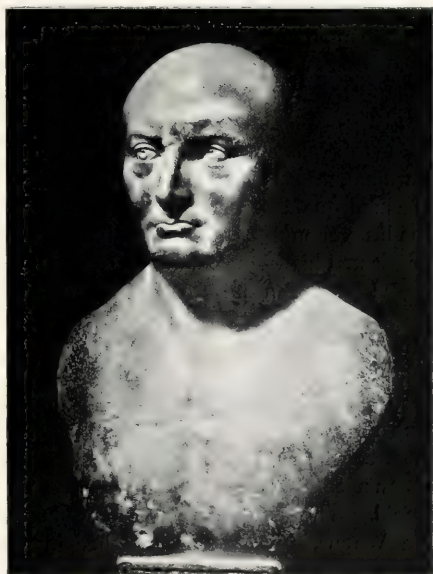


Photo by Albano.

SCIPIO AFRICANUS
IN THE CAFFARELLI MUSEUM, ROME.

IN SICILY

men of the Pagan era, not Syracusan-born, to have visited the city of Theocritus and Archimedes. The Christian era opens well with the apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul. If Gregory the Great never came to Sicily himself, his mother Sylvia was a Sicilian born—it is said, a Syracusan. At all events, it was out of his great Sicilian estates that he endowed his six Sicilian monasteries, two of which (S. Giovanni degli Eremiti, just inside, and S. Martino, outside Palermo) survive to-day, estranged to other uses. We know that his agent, Peter, lived at Syracuse, for his shortcomings are pilloried in S. Gregory's Letters.

The tale of Christian Syracuse begins with these two saints; it concludes with another saint—the gentle John Henry Newman—and two of the world's greatest admirals—the immortal Nelson and the stout Dutch Admiral De Ruyter. Goethe seems to have missed Syracuse, and Newman to have missed its significance.

CARDINAL NEWMAN AT SYRACUSE

I can picture the late Professor Freeman—who was, like the Cardinal, a scholar of Trinity, Oxford—never forgiving him for his inadequate recognition of Syracuse, concerning which Newman has little enough to say, partly, perhaps, because a sirocco with profuse rain lasted his whole stay.

“I have seen the Fountain of Arethusa, and rowed up the Anapus to gather the papyrus and to see the remains of the Temple of Minerva, which are indeed magnificent, and looked at the remaining columns of Jupiter Olympius. I have been conning over Thucydides, particularly yesterday, and this morning in the boat, and am at home with the whole place; only I have not seen the theatre and amphitheatre, which, being Roman, I care little for. Glad to go back to Catania early to-morrow morning. . . . The day makes me sad and stupid. The great harbour is now before my eyes, the Olympeium, the Anapus, Epipolæ—all drenched in wet; and here the Consul has just come to tell me that the passport people are laying their heads together to keep me here another day or extort money. So you see I am in strife and contention.”

CARDINAL NEWMAN AT SYRACUSE

He did, however, find a hotel in Syracuse, and some English people in it who had come from Malta on their way overland from India, as they are beginning to do again in considerable numbers. He was asked to the wedding-party of the son of a Sicilian judge with the Russian consul's daughter. He says:—

“Though by no means a brilliant party, it was such a contrast to ancient Syracuse that I thought of the Corfu ball. Somehow altogether Syracuse is more like Corfu and the Ionian towns than anything I have seen since—narrow streets, low houses, misery visible; and next morning, when I went to catch a glimpse of the amphitheatre before starting, it, being a garrisoned town, reminded me still more forcibly of Corfu.”

Strangely enough, Newman found Epipolæ “neither beautiful nor romantic, but striking as resembling huge human works, walls, etc.” Huge human works are contained in Epipolæ, though Newman did not know it—the famous castle of Euryalus, the most splendid piece of engineering that has come down to us from the Greek architects. Oddly enough, he does not mention the word *Athenian* in connection with Syracuse, though he tells us that he read up his Thucydides.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD GREEK SYRACUSE

THE GREEK THEATRE AT SYRACUSE

IT is my purpose to draw pictures, not to draw plans. Concerning the Greek theatre, for instance, I take it for granted that it *is* 250 yards round the top tier, that it *did* contain twelve rows of marble seats and forty-seven rows cut in the rock, and that these seats would accommodate 24,000 people. This works out an average of about 500 people in each row, counting the smallest bottom row of the horseshoe as well as the largest top row. I suppose it is all right, though I could not get Witheridge to believe it, even after I had pointed out to him how much easier it was for this theatre to hold 24,000 people than for the much smaller theatre at Taormina to hold 40,000. He said that was all right, but that it was impossible to say whether the theatre at Taormina ever held 40,000 people or not, because there never could have been 40,000 people in the city to try, let alone 40,000 free people, and slaves were not admitted into any of the 40,000 seats.

The Romans, who made Syracuse the capital of the island, Romanized the stage of the famous Greek theatre. I am enabled, by the courtesy of Messrs. Chatto and Windus, to reproduce from their Guhl and Koner's *Life of the Greeks and Romans* "The Theatre of Syracuse in Roman times." For an explanation of the picture, I must refer the reader to that book, where the subject is gone into fully.

You can see that this must have been a very complete theatre, because there are so many deep hollows like wells round the stage for

THE GREEK THEATRE AT SYRACUSE

you to break your neck in. They are still water-tight, for they nearly always have water in them, and Syracuse is not a place where much rain falls. They are also, I have no doubt, at the proper season of the year, provided with a proper complement of the big, fat, ugly,



THE THEATRE OF SYRACUSE IN ROMAN TIMES

From Gullt and Knu's *Life of the Greeks and Romans*, by permission of Messrs. Clutton and Winks.

black Sicilian snakes. I am thankful to say that I have never seen any plan showing the stage of the theatre at Syracuse restored, and the object of all these hollows explained in the style of Niccolo Strazzeri's Taormina Guide. The one thing I hated about the theatre at Taormina was its having a plan like this. I felt bound to buy the plan and puzzle out what portion of the ruin corresponds with E E and a dotted line, and all that sort of thing. I did not really care a bit what the various holes and corners were used for; it was quite sufficient for me that the plays of the great Greek dramatists had been played there before Greeks who were so great that their biographies had been preserved for the education of my youth. Because, even when I had made out what portion of the ruins corresponded with each name and specification in the plan, it was not of the smallest use to me until I found myself in the same room with Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, and more leisure than I usually have at my disposal. Those who want a correct diagnosis of the holes in the Greek theatre at Syracuse must go to their Murray for them. It was quite sufficient for me that the Syracusans were building this theatre overlooking the harbour when the ship came into port which brought the news of the Battle of Salamis (fought on the same day that the Syracusan Gelo annihilated the Carthaginians at Himera).

IN SICILY

and that the plays of Æschylus are known to have been performed in it when Æschylus was alive and the Henry Arthur Jones of his day.

THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF GREEK DRAMATISTS

Witheridge doubted if Æschylus's plays were ever so interesting as Mr. Jones's, because he had read in a threepenny magazine that the poor man was handicapped by the fact that his most alluring women characters would be played by men, and that as the audience would only see masks instead of faces, the play of feature would be inexpressive; and if, as is supposed, the actors had megaphones inside their masks, similar to those used by Lord Kitchener to yell his commands across the Nile, the obstacles to anything like delicate acting would appear to have been insuperable. The Greeks must have been even easier to please than the Chinese. And the plays could not have been written for printing; so you have to fall back upon the idea that for really hearing their plays they must have depended upon reciters. Witheridge said he hoped the Greeks liked recitations better than he did. The choruses were very likely invigorating. Even the ridiculous way in which they were managed in Greek plays—to give the plot away—may not have robbed them of all their rousing qualities. The Greek idea of a chorus, it must be remembered, was not the having the same set of jingle repeated at the end of every four lines, but more the idea of a chorus at the Gaiety, except that the words used in the Greek chorus were absolutely pregnant with meaning, which could not be said of the words used in choruses at the Gaiety, though they sometimes have a double meaning.

THE GLORY OF THE GREEK THEATRE AT SYRACUSE

All this about Witheridge and his magazine may appear very irrelevant, but it is not really irrelevant because it is leading to my point, and my point is that the Greek theatre of Syracuse, as we have it to-day, is almost as good for purposes of enjoyment as it was when the Syracusans of Dionysius's time sat there; except, of

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Photo by a visitor

THE GREEK THEATRE

THE GREEK THEATRE AT SYRACUSE

course, while the fighting between the citizens and the Athenians was going on all round, converting the whole non-militant population of Syracuse into war correspondents.

Speaking seriously, the Greek theatre of Syracuse is one of the most splendid monuments of antiquity. It is nothing that the marble friezes should have been stripped from the front of the stage and the back of the auditorium and the seats of the mighty—it is nothing that little of the stage should have been left except the traps. If the whole stage were perfect, and were trodden by two or three actors on stilts in great ugly masks, spouting Greek through megaphones, we should soon get tired of attending to them, and abandon ourselves to the real enjoyment, looking over their heads at the great blue harbour, which was the scene of a duel *à l'outrance* between nations; or swinging round in our seats to take in the beauty now of the city on Ortygia rising from its island walls, now of the fabled and honeyed hills of Hybla, now straight across the water to the columns of the Olympian Jove, who delivered the whole armies of Athens into the hands of his citizens at the very gates of his temple.

Commanding such a view, the Greek theatre of Syracuse has really one of the finest positions imaginable; though it does not stand on a mountain-top, face to face with Etna, like the theatre at Taormina, it is, I consider, superior in its site to the more famous theatre of Dionysus at Athens, for it is less confined. And it is worthy of its site, for nothing more perfect in symmetry could be imagined. It is built with such a superb sweep. I could come here at sunset day after day to revel in the pure blue sky overhead, and think, and watch the lizards playing their eternal comedy indifferently on Æschylus's stage and Dionysius's throne. Between the theatre and the sea there is to-day a lemon grove—lemon groves veil with fine dignity so many of the scars of antiquity. The bersaglieri geese and woolly pigs of the vicinity have more reverence than the lizards; they do not enter the theatre. Perhaps literature is a painful subject to geese whose quills have been drawn (the woolly appearance they have in Syracuse is, I believe, due to that).

IN SICILY

I must say I was glad that the swine were not allowed to use the theatre as a pearl. From the back of the theatre a street sunk in the rock and honeycombed with tombs leads to the height above.

To lovers of poetry the theatre is hallowed by the fact that it was built by the elder Hiero, the patron of Pindar, and that within its circuit were heard for the first time all the ringing odes which Pindar wrote in honour of the triumphs of his Sicilian protector.

To lovers of liberty, the theatre of Syracuse is peculiarly hallowed for its connection with Timoleon. Twenty years before his expedition to Sicily, Timoleon had connived at the death of his elder brother, Timophanes, when the latter, having acquired control of the mercenaries, and being supported by a powerful party, was about to make himself tyrant of Corinth. He stood by and wept while his brother was killed; their mother cursed him, and for twenty years he mourned his brother's wickedness and death, and withered under that curse. Then came the question of who should command the forlorn hope of ten triremes which were to be sent to Syracuse against the tyrant. A chance voice in the Corinthian assembly nominated the man who had been dragging out the life of a self-condemned criminal and exile in the depths of the country. He showed marvellous heroism and generalship in defeating vastly superior forces of the Carthaginians; of Dionysius II. himself, to relieve Sicily from whose tyranny the expedition was sent; and of Hicetas, who had a rival project for freeing Syracuse. When Timoleon had overcome all opposition he destroyed the fortifications of Ortygia, which were the fetters used by the tyrants for keeping Syracuse in subjection; remodelled the constitution of the city on the basis of the laws of Diocles, and introduced ten thousand new citizens, mostly Corinthians and Syracusan exiles, who were followed by fifty thousand other Greek emigrants. This was before he won his famous victory on the River Crimessus, where, with eleven thousand men, he routed seventy-five thousand Carthaginians. It was there that the celebrated episode of the Selinon (the wild parsley) occurred.

His army met several mules laden with it. His men were appalled

TIMOLEON : THE STREET OF TOMBS

because it was used for decorating tombs, but Timoleon was a Corinthian, and, as such, proudly remembered that it was used to crown the victors in the Isthmian games. He seized a handful and made a wreath for his own head, and immediately afterwards a violent thunder and hail storm broke in the face of the Carthaginians.

Soon after this he captured and executed his rival, Hicetas, and Mamercus, the tyrant of Catanè. As soon as he had freed the island he laid down his power; all he asked as his reward was a house to live in at Syracuse and sufficient land to support him. He became a citizen, and sent for his family, and lived to be an old, old man. As Sir William Smith wrote, "He continued, however, to retain, though in a private station, the greatest influence in the state. During the latter part of his life, though he was totally deprived of sight, yet when important affairs were discussed in the assembly it was customary to send for Timoleon, who was carried on a litter into the middle of the theatre amid the shouts and the affectionate greetings of the assembled citizens. When the tumult of his reception had subsided he listened patiently to the debate. The opinion which he pronounced was usually ratified by the vote of the assembly, and he then left the theatre amidst the same cheers which had greeted his arrival."

The stones on which the litter of the blind Timoleon rested are there to-day, a memorial of one of the most extraordinary careers ever achieved by mortal man, a career which plumbed the depth of despair and the height of honour.

THE STREET OF TOMBS

The Street of Tombs was full of carefully cut caverns and niches, with what seemed to me the most obvious object, but Witheridge had had less experience of Sicily, which is one vast Campo Santo, and asked what they were for. The *custode*, who spoke a little English, said that it was where they put people when they had done with them, and that the niches outside were for the catalogues. Which is not a bad way of describing cemeteries and inscriptions. A few sepulchres

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must have had catalogues inside also. This is the famous Street of Tombs. There is not anything in any of them now, but they are very fine tombs, if you are satisfied with a sepulchre cut out of the virgin rock. They mostly have three of what the guide-books call *arcosoli*, which is to say round-arched recesses, one at the back and one at each side. Larger tombs, like that in the Necropolis, ascribed,



Photo by Crafts.

THE STREET OF TOMBS

gratuitously, to Archimedes, have more. The street is not long, and suddenly debouches on to a little rocky tableland blue with the flowers of flax in spring, which is the time when tourists do go there. Deep down in the rocky street between the tombs are cut two great ruts of chariot wheels. I have not the least doubt that the distance between them would fit the two-wheeled Sicilian cart of to-day, which is very charioty. There is hardly the proper repose about the Street of Tombs, because there is a very fine conduit (the ancient aqueduct, in fact) for washerwomen up at the top, and the Syracusan washerwoman does not work in silence, especially when

THE TOMBS OF ARCHIMEDES AND TIMOLEON

there are strangers near. She tucks her dress up and stands almost waist deep in the conduit, and beats the clothes on the stones, which form its sides, in the approved way in which the washerwomen of the Latin races wage war upon linen from the British Channel to the African sea, and never so much as gives a glance to the blaze of blue pimpernels and deep orange marigolds and huge daisies which grow up to the very edges of the stones on which she does her execution.

THE TOMB OF ARCHIMEDES, AND THE GREEK MEANING OF THE WORD "PHILOSOPHER"

The so-called Greek Necropolis, which is some little way from the Street of Tombs, is a much more interesting place to visit, for it has such a much greater variety. There you find the tomb of Archimedes, which is not the tomb of Archimedes, but is assigned to him because it is the best tomb at Syracuse. It is really charming; it looks like a little temple cut out of the face of the rock with its worn Doric façade. Its Doric, it is true, is Roman Doric, but that does not signify, seeing that Archimedes was killed by the Romans, and that the Roman general said such very complimentary things to the reporters attached to his staff about the dead philosopher. Archimedes, of course, was not a philosopher, but an inventor like Edison, only the *Public School Latin Primer* and the students' *Greece and Rome*, and those kind of books, have not realised that *philosophus* means an inventor as well as a philosopher, and probably also an engineer. Archimedes was certainly an engineer, and so was the man who fell down Etna—Empedocles.

But I am forgetting about the tomb. It is a very fine tomb, with a great big niche for Archimedes or the other paterfamilias occupying the whole of the right side, while there are four niches on the left side and five at the back. It may be compared with another great cave sepulchre on a slightly lower level immediately beyond it. You have to trespass to get into them, but that is of no consequence in Sicily, where they never keep laws or large dogs. The second tomb is ascribed with equal incorrectness to Timoleon.

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As a matter of fact Timoleon was buried in the Timolonteum, which occupied the site of the palæstra, and Archimedes, as we are informed by Cicero, who had his tomb cleared of rubbish, near the Agragian



Tombe di Archimede e Timoleone

THE (SO-CALLED) TOMBS OF ARCHIMEDES AND TIMOLEON

From "*Antichi Monumenti Siracusani*," by Vincenzo Politti, 1836

gate, which must have been near what is now called the Portella del Fusco.

This is Professor Orsi's opinion. Agragian means leading to Acragas (Girgenti). "Achradinæ" below is the mistake of a man not familiar with the locality. Sicilians named their gates after the distant city to which the road led, as we say Oxford Street or Uxbridge Road.

"I will present you with an humble and obscure mathematician of the same city, called Archimedes, who lived many years after; whose tomb, overgrown with shrubs and briars, I in my Quæstorship discovered, when the Syracusans knew nothing of it, and even denied that there was any such thing remaining; for I remembered some verses which I had been informed were engraved on his monument, and these set forth that on the top of the tomb there was placed a sphere with a cylinder. When I had carefully examined all the

TOURISTS AND THE TOMBS OF SYRACUSE

monuments, for there are a great many tombs at the gate of Achradina (Agragian Gate), I observed a small column standing out a little above the briars, with the figure of a sphere and a cylinder upon it; whereupon I immediately said to the Syracusans, for there were some of their principal men with me there, that I imagined that was what I was enquiring for. Several men being sent in with scythes, cleared the way, and made an opening for us. When we could get at it, and were come near to the front of the pedestal, I found the inscription, though the latter parts of all the verses were effaced almost half away. Thus one of the noblest cities of Greece, and one which at one time likewise had been very celebrated for learning, had known nothing of the monument of its greatest genius, if it had not been discovered to them by a native of Arpinum."*

WHY THE TOURIST PREFERS THE TOMBS OF SYRACUSE TO THE TOMBS OF ATHENS OR ROME

You do not at Syracuse, though it is such a city of the dead, get any tombs to compare with the glorious marble monuments in the Street of Tombs at Athens, or the vast tower-like erections of the Romans, but you have better fun in the Greek Necropolis here than you ever get at Athens or Rome. For there is so much in the tombs to which you may help yourself. Somebody, perhaps in the employ of the Sicilian archæological department, which has its headquarters in Palermo, or the municipality of Syracuse, opens up some fresh tombs in search of an important find for the museum, or even for himself. The people who make these excavations are hardened sinners; they want whole things, or, at any rate, important fragments; for minor fragments and bones they have no regard, they just leave them for the next comer. There is no caretaker in the Greek Necropolis. If you or I like to take a cab and a spade and dig, there is only the smallest chance of anybody interfering with us. Doubtless it is illegal and also trespassing, but it will not be noticed. We never got so far as taking a spade, but we often took samples. It pleased the cabmen.

* CICERO, *Tusculan Disputations*, Bohn's Translation, p. 454.

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THE SYRACUSAN CABMAN

The Syracusan cabman likes anything better than driving. His great idea when he has a fare is to get him to the catacombs or the Greek theatre group of antiquities, which take a good long time to explore, or to get him to the post office to send something, which also takes a good long time. He is better pleased, also, if he is allowed to transact the business at the post office instead of minding his horse. He likes shopping, too, when any stranger goes to a shop; but so few strangers know that there is anything to buy at Syracuse. The cabbies have not yet learned to take them to the peasants' pottery shops, though I am afraid the cabbies that I employed will in future, because the peasants' pottery of Syracuse* with its pure old Greek shapes has such a never-failing fascination for me. I have a flat full of it; I have sent endless packages of it home by parcel post, packed in fig baskets. Over each package the cabby had two entertainments; first, he would help me buy it by running the price up or down, according to his honesty, and then he would spend an hour with me in the post office while I was sending it off.

THE GREEK NECROPOLIS AND ITS STYLES OF TOMBS

The Greek Necropolis was useful in the same way. The cabby soon discovered that Stephana would go on all the morning or afternoon standing over a tomb while he raked out the debris in search of interesting pieces of pottery and the like.

The prevailing form of tomb in the Greek Necropolis is the honeycomb pattern. A number of tombs, each about the size of a coffin, are cut out of the rock, side by side, divided by partitions a few inches thick. They are cut down vertically into the surface of the rock, not horizontally out of its side. Often they are right on the top of the ground where you walk—so often, in fact, that it does not do to star-gaze or you would break your neck. But there is little temptation to star-gaze when every inch of the ground is occupied by tombs with their treasures trove, or a carpet of wild flowers that could hardly be matched for variety and richness of colour.

* Specimens of it form the decoration on the fly leaves of this volume.

THE TOMBS OF THE GREEK NECROPOLIS

Sometimes the tombs are cut, not out of the surface of the ground, but out of the bottom of a shallow pit, which probably would have had some kind of building over it. The coffin-shaped niches were covered with stone or terra-cotta lids, and the ashes of the deceased were often enclosed in terra-cotta coffins two or three feet long, shaped rather like cigars or chrysalises. I saw one, nearly perfect, dug up about a couple of months earlier. It had a large opening on its back covered by a lid, rather in the style of the lid of a teapot.

There were great pieces of these coffin-lids lying about; I could have helped myself to a piece about two feet long and weighing several pounds, but I thought it would be an awkward item in a portmanteau. I do not know if these honeycomb tombs open to the sky were Christian or not. Witheridge said he was quite certain they were because they would come in so handy for the Resurrection. There was one pit containing thirty-two of them, and looking just like a hornet's nest. But they were not all like this; sometimes they were regular vaulted rooms, sometimes there were several stories of them, sometimes they were chambers, sometimes they were slits in the earth, and those were the best for the treasure trove of bits of vases and skulls and bones. Somehow or other, though tourists did not mind putting their hands into a tomb which opened sideways-on to them, they were shy of jumping down into a grave and fossicking about, unlike the cabman—a Syracusan cabman is not shy about anything. And if he has worked in Malta and learnt a word or two of English—well——

STEPHANA'S POETICAL IDEAS

Stephana was much nicer over inspecting tombs than Witheridge was: she had such nice ideas. Sicily is so full of sweet herbs growing wild, that an aromatic scent rises as you tread in a place like this. It reminded her of embalming and immortality, and she said the same sort of appropriate things about the niches where marble memorials had once glistened on the walls of the tombs themselves and on the creeper-hung cliff of the exquisite Latomia of S. Venere, whose

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luxuriance of semi-tropical leaf and liana and blossom stretches in a green gulf below your feet as you stand at the edge of the Necropolis.

THE GARDEN OF THE LATOMIA DI S. VENERE

We hurried round to its entrance, for it can only be descended at one point. There were more women washing in the clear, gushing conduits above it. This part of Syracuse is delicious on a summer's day with its chatter and sparkle of running water and its cool depth of shade. At the very entrance of the Latomia, which is the *plaisance* of Baron Targia, is Venus's bath—a little shell-shaped cave, with its lower valve full of clear cold water and its upper valve fringed with dripping maidenhair. And there is a marvellous fringe of maidenhair at its entrance, which is inscribed—

“Come l'antica tradizione rimembra
Qui Venere bagno le belle membra.”

All of us instinctively glanced at Stephana's golden head and slim elegance—the white figure against the cool, dark cave—as she read it out.

The contrast between the baronial rank of the proprietor and the old, nearly black, hag who showed you round for a consideration of twopence-halfpenny was not greater than the contrast between the grotesque nigger heads and terra-cotta squirts into which his fancy broke out, and the wonderful vegetation of his garden, for it was wonderful. Sicilian, English, and semi-tropical plants mingled in thickets, very much as they pleased; look one way and you might see a striped agave growing out of a tree, or a huge red fig with fresh roots dropping down from its branches like a banyan; give the least turn and tall nespoli and prickly-pears with brambles trailing over them, joined together with fifty feet of bunching roses, almost bewildered you. Another turn and you saw a bank of heliotrope four feet high burying a fallen column, and all abuzz with bees. You looked to see where the column had fallen from, and noticed that the face of the cliff above was fretted with tombs and monuments, or rather niches for monuments, of which I believe only one in all Syracuse

THE LATOMIA DI S. VENERE

retains its marble. Under the cliffs was a deeper tangle than ever of aloes, like a thousand green starfish with octopus arms writhing round their orange spires of blossom; agaves; yuccas, which were goodly trees; arbutus trees; geraniums almost as tall as trees; rosemary bushes as high as your head; with roses pouring over everything, and a carpet of rank close wild flowers in which the wild asparagus, which is not asparagus at all, but butcher's broom, or something of the kind, was conspicuous. A Niagara of ivy flowed over the precipitous sides of the Latomia and over every stump. The ground was pink with fallen peach-blossom, blue with bluebells; and the air was loaded with the fragrance of the opalescent Sicilian frisia. A frog was piping from the baron's rather vulgar little *puce d'eau*.

OUR EXPULSION FROM EDEN

It was a place to linger in rather than scamper round, but the silent old slave who was conducting us was so evidently impatient that we gave her twopence-halfpenny, like other people, and allowed ourselves to be hurried out. "This old black idol," said Witheridge, "has not realised that Americans make their tip proportionate to the amount of a person's time which they use." The Italian's parsimony is unvaried, but we were sorry to leave S. Venus's Latomia, because, though it is vulgarer than the Latomia of the Paradiso and the Cappuccini, it is sunnier and flowerier. The saint's name is really Venera, I believe, but in Sicily they always muddle her up with Venere, the laughing Lady of Eryx. We submitted with better grace to our expulsion from this garden of Eden, because the day was yet young enough for us to go on to the amphitheatre, and the altar of hecatombs (Ara), and the Greco-Roman Piscina.

CONCERNING CARLO QUINTO AND THE NEW VIALE

The amphitheatre had its Street of Tombs too, until Carlo Quinto came along looking for hewn stones to build his fine new fortress, of which the Syracusans pulled down almost the last vestige the other day to have a *viale*, like other Italian cities. A *viale* is an avenue,

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and it too often implies the destruction of mediæval fortifications, because the site is so obviously suited for making a carriage-drive round the town. All that remains to his family of his mighty empire is the shorn kingdom of Spain, and the fast breaking-up empire of Austria. It is quite possible that Charles V. will yet be remembered chiefly as the man who destroyed the priceless classical ruins of Syracuse and Girgenti. The guide asserts that the Roman amphitheatre and its Street of Tombs were quite perfect up to his time.

THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE

To-day the amphitheatre is a picturesque oval of low, grey walls, with a ruined arch at each end, and superincumbent banks of waving masses of gorgeous wild flowers standing out against the horizon as you look up from the arena. In the centre of the arena is a rect-



Photo by Anconora.

THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE

THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE

angular hollow, locally known as the Naumachia, though Murray says it is only a huge cistern, and that the two stone piers which rise from the centre supported its roof beam. Sicilians always call any piece of masonry they do not understand a naumachia, though why anybody should want to have a naval battle in a cistern in a place quite close to the sea does not appear. The guide points out, with the officious eagerness of his race, the arrangements for the entrance of beasts and gladiators; the great vomitories which ran down under the galleries to admit to the lower seats; the naumachia which was not a naumachia, and so on; and explains elaborately where the smart people and where the common people sat; but he experiences an initial difficulty in doing this, because, being a bit of a classical scholar, he likes to speak of the patricians by their correct designation of *populus*, and nine out of ten of the English who go there think he is trying to say *populace*, and wonder what the distinction is when he explains that so many tiers of seats round the arena were reserved for the populace, and that the seats of the plebeians at the top occupied a space seventy metres long and forty-six metres wide. His private explanation of the naumachia is gruesome enough for the most sensation-loving tourist; he says that it was full of crocodiles, and that part of the entertainment was to see them eat the bodies of the fallen gladiators, when they were not carried out, feet foremost, through the door by which they had entered in all the pride of strength such a short time before.

THE WAY I SAW THE AMPHITHEATRE

I shall not attempt to give a technical description of the amphitheatre; it is explained at great length in the guide-books, and I do not believe that a single person, who did not happen to be in Sicily at the time, or to have lately returned from it, would read my description. I am content to remember it as an oval of green sward, with an interesting hole in the middle surrounded by the remains of ancient Roman walls and seats, resting against a background of the floweriest meadow, and yielding exquisite vistas through arches in just the picturesque stage of ruin. When I am in Syracuse I like to go there very often, and, throwing myself down at the top

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of the bank among the flowers and bees and lizards, glance at the gallery of the gladiators; and the broad flights of steps down which the noble ladies of Syracuse swept in their gauzy silken robes; and the long tiers once covered with marble seats, on which they sat deciding with drooped or upturned thumbs the issue of life or death. Sitting under almond or poplar or peach, among the great speckled lord-and-lady leaves, I can raise the whole picture before my mind, without knowing the precise function filled by each surviving patch of masonry. Like the Greek theatre, the amphitheatre of Syracuse is remarkably elegant.

THE ALTAR OF HECATOMBS—THE ARA

Only a stone's-throw from it is the altar of hecatombs, the vast platform of masonry which history records to be the work of Hiero II. I have no reason for supposing that it is not 640 feet long by 61 feet wide, or that it was not used for a monster sacrifice of 460 oxen once a year in memory of the expulsion of Thrasybulus. This is Murray's



Photo by Cooper

THE ALTAR OF HECATOMBS

THE LATOMIA DEL PARADISO

account of it, and it sounds all right when you have translated the metres of the guide into feet. It looks like one side of a gigantic temple stylobate, in other words, the lower sides of the platform are cut into gigantic steps, though you do not use them for ascending it. There is a quite insignificant flight for that. It is imposing from its size, but it has, as Witheridge said, an unfinished appearance, for it looks as if it had been cut for something to be built on the top of it, which never has been built. When it was cut it probably looked upon something important, to-day it looks upon the inevitable lemon grove—Sicily is half lemons and half dust. When I told Witheridge that 460 cattle were sacrificed upon it yearly, his only remark was that he supposed the reason why the modern Syracusans had to do with goat's milk was because they had used up all the cattle for this altar.

THE CABMAN'S PARADISE—THE LATOMIA DEL PARADISO

In the opinion of the cabman, neither the amphitheatre, nor the theatre, nor the Street of Tombs, nor the Greek Necropolis comes up to the Latomia del Paradiso, and they do not think about the Piscina at all, though they encourage their hirers to see as much as possible, while they lounge about outside the gate of paradise and a handy public-house, which, to do them justice, they patronise very little. The Sicilian cabby does not spend his scanty substance in riotous living. The same guide who pretends to take you round the theatre and amphitheatre takes you to the Latomia del Paradiso. That is his *tour de force*, and he puts on an air of becoming dignity the moment you enter its back gate and find yourself face to face with a wall of masonry with wild figs springing from its face, and a wig of prickly-pears on its brow. There are ropemakers under this majestic overhanging cliff, and more ropemakers when you get inside. They are among the principal stage properties of this Latomia. There is also a fiddler, whose use you learn afterwards, though he is not so effective as a paper biscuit-bag.

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THE EAR OF DIONYSIUS

The guide opens another back door, and you find yourself inside the famous *orecchio*—the Ear of Dionysius. Everything is Dionysius at Syracuse. There was more than one Dionysius, but this does not signify, because the guide treats them both as one. The particular Dionysius about whom all the stories are told, such as his having been rolled down from Taormina to the sea, and so on, was Dionysius I.



Photo by Incorporated.

THE EAR OF DIONYSIUS

The ear is a huge cavern, curiously like a human ear in shape, which has an orifice leading from it into a small chamber above, where Dionysius is supposed to have sat and overheard the slightest whisper of his captives. The guide did not know his company. This is the kind of thing which really interests Witheridge. He soon saw his mistake, and said it took a great deal of trouble to go to, and, when that was not sufficient, said that the key was kept at the Municipio in Syracuse, a statement which I knew would be investigated. But it did for the moment, and the story does just as

well without. Anyhow, it has only been current for a mere three or four centuries. By way of proving its truth the guide blows out a biscuit-bag, if anyone has been thoughtful enough to bring such a thing, and, failing that, bangs the door. The echo makes a sound like a cannon-

THE CAVE OF THE ROPE-SPINNERS

shot. Doubtless Dionysius could hear that if he were sitting in his chamber—he could almost hear it where he is now. And then the fiddler comes in, and plays like a *maestro* on an old fiddle which would fetch many pounds in London, though the tune only fetches him a halfpenny or a penny from the most liberally-minded people. The real point of the performance is not his playing, but the echoes producing the effect of a whole orchestra with a single instrument.

THE CAVE OF THE ROPE-SPINNERS

Then you pass on to the cave of the rope-spinners, which has a roof curiously like the Saracenic roof of the Cappella Reale at Palermo; indeed, its dropping points, tipped with maidenhair, suggest the multiplication-table bosom of Diana of the Ephesians. I never could understand why the Diana of Asia Minor should present this multi-maternal aspect when the Diana of most Greek legends was a long-legged bachelor maid who followed the hounds on foot. There was a goat, a large white goat, which reminded you of Diana, the Ephesian one, suckling two dear little white kids which anticked in front of Stephana's pointed kodak. As there was no immediate chance of our having to eat these kids, or even see them being skinned in a shop, we felt quite benevolent towards them, as they skipped round the old man of the sea, who seemed to be the head of the rope-making concern, and offered us water from a dirty Greek pitcher, after he had wiped his nose on the hank of string he had just made. The caverns in which the rope-spinners have their primitive wheels and long revolving threads stretch far into the bowels of the earth, and their stalactited roofs sometimes soar far overhead, sometimes bow almost to the ground. The effect is much enhanced when the caverns are flooded, as I have sometimes seen them, and their snowy stalactites and rich tufts of maidenhair are mirrored below. The rope-spinners, like the fiddler, expect a halfpenny, and it is enough for them, because the latomia is as full of them as aromatic herbs, and they do their spinning just the same, whether anybody comes to see them or not. Sicily is full of rope-spinners. Wherever

IN SICILY

there is a long, open space, as under a city wall, you hear the whirr of their wheels. Their wheels are often old and graceful, but, as Witheridge said, judging from the appearance of the spinners, spinning is a low down sort of business.

THE GRECO-ROMAN PISCINA

As we had not seen the Greco-Roman piscina or the adjacent church of S. Nicola when we were at Syracuse in 1896, we had asked for them first; but the guide was not at all interested in our seeing them, and made one excuse after another about the key. The fact was that the piscina was a difficult place for him to handle the entire body of visitors visiting the group of sights round the Greek theatre. He did not want to show anyone anything in particular, he simply wanted to levy his due on everybody who saw anything. But in Sicily you can see most things if you stick to your point, and I had determined to see S. Nicola and the piscina. Stephana asked if there was anything old to see at S. Nicola. Of course, said the guide; it was Norman. But when we got there he said it was old, but there was nothing old left. I had heard the same thing before in Sicily, very often; getting coppers for showing people things is an occupation which commends itself to the Sicilian. It is not much trouble, and talking to strangers is almost as good as reading a newspaper, which he is too poor to afford.

However, as we had to go through the church in order to see the piscina, it was of no consequence. The piscina itself looks like the crypt of a church, only, being Greek in style and not Roman, it has square piers instead of columns, and the roof is supported with architraves secured together with keystones, and not vaulted like a Roman piscina. It is said to be the only piscina in the Greek style in existence, and is supported by twelve piers. The inexperienced reader is not to suppose that this affair, which I have described as being like a church crypt and supported by a dozen piers, is the same sort of piscina as the shallow soap-dish in a Gothic niche which you see scattered about our old cathedrals. It is, in plain parlance, the term

THE VILLA LANDOLINA

used for a reservoir in these parts, in consequence, I suppose, of fish having been kept in them; so that they really have a better right to the name than the cathedral piscina. This particular one is said to have been used for supplying the water to the so-called naumachia in the amphitheatre. It was certainly used as a cemetery in what has so admirably been described as the Low Latin period, like everything else in Sicily which is old enough to have been in existence at the time. Sicily is one great honeycomb of tombs and catacombs.

The cabman knowing what time Madame Politi had her meals, and thinking we were not wanted just yet, drew up, like a commercial traveller's gig outside a favourite pub, at the gates of the Villa Landolina. He thought he might as well have another hour or two at one franc fifty.

THE GARDEN OF THE VILLA LANDOLINA

It seemed as if the cabman's benevolent intentions would be defeated by the dogs of the villa. Such a caterwauling of dogs you never heard as when our two cabs drove up outside the funny little gingerbread villa which is dignified with such a garden. In its prime the garden must have been very fine. Even now one cannot help being impressed with the long-established sub-tropical growths, such as four-inch bamboos, and bananas twenty feet high, one of which had a fine show of white flowers. A lofty terrace runs all round it, with no balustrade on the side of the garden, which is twenty feet below, but a thick, tall hedge of rosemary. Exquisite roses trail over the terrace like so much ivy, and down in the garden below are fine arbutus, fig, and other trees, with rich carpets of the Sicilian weed, the golden-hooded trefoli. And every now and then you pass through an arbour whose roof and walls are masses of crimson rambler roses. But perhaps the most extravagant floral feature of this terrace is the thick, close beard of pig's-face which pours over it. Nothing could be more appropriate than its Italian name of *Barba di Giove*—Jupiter's beard—because of its golden colour when its leaves turn in the autumn.

IN SICILY

A GARDEN OF GRAVES

If only the gardener would have left us alone, how we could have enjoyed that fragrant, flowery, old-world terrace! Every second he brought Stephana a present of some flowers, perfectly useless,

because he picked them with stems an inch and a half long, and paid no heed to our warning that we had them all in Madame Politi's garden, and were allowed to help ourselves to anything we wanted. Perhaps he was some good, for though we did not attach much importance to the four-wheel cycle which might have been made in the eighteenth century, and to which he drew our attention with such pride, if it had not been for him, we might have sacrificed not only it to note the elegance of the tall, dark cypresses and the beautiful contrast between the



Photo by Leone.

PHYL. LANDOLINA VENUS

Discovered in the garden of the Villa; now in the Museum at Syracuse

pink buds and the young, brown leaves of the inevitable lemon groves: We might not have noticed that in the old days of Catholic intolerance the Barone's garden received the bones of many a brave English and American sailor, which otherwise would have had to be buried in secret in the caverns of the *Latomia dei Cappuccini*. Von Platen, the German poet, who died in his thirty-ninth year

A GARDEN OF GRAVES

in Syracuse, was buried here in 1835; and W. B. Dilling, ship's surgeon of the *Edinburgh*, in 1836. A person of more consideration than either in the eyes of his friends seems to have been Mr. James S. Deblois, purser of the famous U.S.A. frigate *Constitution*—the immortal *Constitution*. He has a pyramid like the tomb of Caius Cestius. Joseph Baker, buried here in 1824, was refused burial in consecrated ground, though he held the official position of Vice-Consul. There is one curiously anonymous tablet which records the death of the nameless captains of the nameless United States' gunboats, No. 3 and No. 10, on February 11th and March 31st, 1806.

It seems odd now that people should have been refused Christian burial only sixty years ago because they were Protestants, but it adds quality to the picturesqueness of Syracuse to find these mouldering graves in unexpected corners of ancient gardens.



Photo by Saunders.

THE LATOMIA CASALE

Which much resembles the Latomia di S. Venere, and lies between the Villa I and di a and the Catacombs

CHAPTER XV.

THE CATACOMBS OF SYRACUSE

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL

AT no great distance from the Villa Landolina, as the crow flies, is S. Giovanni. Its roofless porch gives one of the most elegant effects to be found in Sicilian architecture, and close by you descend to the subterranean church of S. Marcian and the famous Catacombs of Syracuse. Even *per se* S. Marcian is wonderfully interesting, and it has the added interest of being the spot where, according to reverently preserved tradition, St. Paul himself preached to his fellow-Christians, assembled for safety in the caverns they used for cemeteries.

SICILY DESIGNED FOR THE CRADLE OF A RELIGION

The great island of Sicily might have been designed by Nature for the cradle of a religion. Cut off by sea, the prime obstacle to invasion or communication when ships were only open boats, and with its whole interior covered with impenetrable mountain fastnesses, anything which had once obtained a hold in it was almost ineradicable. And with its gigantic, mysterious volcano it seemed, when enveloped in clouds, to touch both heaven and hell—heaven with its lofty head, and hell with its fiery and unfathomed heart.

Indeed, it might well seem the natural avenue by which the sons of men might communicate with the powers of another world. For, apart from its volcano, and its numerous solfataras and hollows running deep into the earth, filled with deadly mephitic vapours, it has such a network of subterraneous caverns as are probably not to be found continuously elsewhere.

SYRACUSE THE CITY OF CAVERNS

It seems as if there is hardly a foot of Sicily which would not sound hollow under your foot from a cavern below it, if your ear was fine enough to detect the vibration. The steep rock upon which the modern city of Girgenti is built, and the flat shore round Marsala, the ancient Lilybæum, are alike honeycombed.

SYRACUSE THE CITY OF CAVERNS

There are extensive catacombs at Palermo, but Syracuse is *par excellence* the caverned city; for not only has it this subterranean church, and the adjoining city of the dead, but its wonderful latomias themselves are gigantic caverns, laid open to the sky by the quarrying of stone for ancient Syracuse and its league-long walls. There is even, though it has not been visited for years, an extensive latomia underneath the Ghetto in modern Syracuse.

USING CISTERNS FOR CEMETERIES

It has been the habit of the successive conquerors of Sicily, from the times of the Greeks onwards, to bury their dead in catacombs, and in the days of the Lower Empire, not content with natural caves, people used the great cisterns designed for collecting the blessed rain in a thirsty land, as, for example, the Piscina at Syracuse, and one of the bottle-shaped reservoirs at Girgenti. From that reservoir, however, known as the Grotta di Fragapane, tunnels were made to the inevitable caves which surrounded it, giving it a similarity to the regular cities of the dead that you find at Marsala and Syracuse. No one knows the extent of either, a little spade work might reveal ramifications running for miles.

NO RECENT DISCOVERIES

Unfortunately there have been no extensive recent discoveries of catacombs, though they may be made any day, and those at present open have been stripped of every object of interest except loose bones and fragments of pottery. And though the Sicilians are not in the least to be trusted to do excavations of vases and statues

IN SICILY

with sufficient delicacy and reverence, there is little doubt that any freshly discovered catacombs would be kept to some extent *in statu quo*, because the islanders are waking up to the value of sights to which its visitors will pay for admission.

THE UNDERGROUND CHURCH OF S. MARCIAN

The special value of the church of S. Marcian lies hardly more in its legendary connection with St. Paul than in its preservation for us, in such a perfect state, of some of the features of the Christian catacombs of Sicily. It is said that once upon a time the church of S. Marcian was surmounted by a temple of Bacchus. It was the cellar of a Bacchic temple, in fact, and probably chosen in the days of persecution because it would be such an unlikely place to suspect. Our guide had a supply of torches and queer little iron lamps, of the shape used by the wise and foolish virgins in old Italian pictures, to show us S. Marcian and the catacombs. I cannot remember now whether he was a young priest or a student in the priests' college attached; all I remember was that he was dressed something like Father Ignatius, and used such funny English that, though he was inordinately proud of it, it was desperately hard for us to be reverent.

THE OLDEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WORLD

He began by claiming that S. Marcian had been a Christian church since 44 B.C.; he said it was the oldest in the world. I admitted that if what he said was true, it must be. This pleased him, and seeing that we were sympathetic, he gave himself the rein in pointing out the chief objects of his beautiful old church. First with vast pride he displayed an old crucifix with the following lucid explanation:—

“He decided that same cross belonged to the wood of Mount Oliveto.”

“He” must have been either St. Paul or S. Marcian, because they seemed responsible for most things here. Then our guide showed us the granite column to which S. Marcian was tied, close to the entrance of the catacombs. Not content, however, with the exploits of Marcian,

THE FONT OF THE CATHEDRAL

he gave us most of the story of Marsyas, the satyr and rival poet, who was skinned by Apollo. It is etiquette in Sicily to mix up saints and mythological personages whenever they have reasonably similar names, especially S. Venera with Venere, for the goddess of love and beauty had one of her two great shrines at the top of Mount Eryx, the western knob of Sicily. The column was of Egyptian granite between two granite arches. He showed us the old carved seat where Marcian sat, and an altar where he asserted that St. Paul had celebrated Mass. The church has some really fine Roman arches and vaulting, but to me the most interesting thing in it was the vaulted altar-tomb of Marcian,—the poor ancient frescoes and the like, which must have been characteristic of so many subterranean chapels and catacombs. The wonderful ancient Greek vase which does duty as a font in the cathedral of Syracuse was discovered in this church, and our guide's way of expressing it was, "Same baptismal font *plas* where old *Paggans* had *ther* first." The church is in the form of a Greek cross, as the subjoined plan shows.



*Fonte Battismale
Gran Vaso di ceramica bianca nella cattedrale di
Syracusa*

THE FONT OF THE CATHEDRAL.

Formerly a crater (mixing bowl) in the Temple of Bacchus (now S. Giovanni), in whose crypt, used as the church of S. Marcian, it was discovered

From a drawing by Salvatore Petti

KEY TO THE GROUND PLAN OF S. MARCIAN *Translated*

"Plan of the antique subterranean church of S. Marcian, the first martyr of Syracuse, near the vast catacombs in Achradina. N.B.—Above this subterranean building is the church to-day called S. John the Evangelist.

IN SICILY



THE SUBTERRANEAN CHURCH OF S. MARCIAN
THE OLDEST IN CHRISTENDOM

From a drawing by Salvatore Pelti

"And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days,"
St. Paul in Acts xviii. 12.

1. Entrance to the staircase by which one descends.
2. Another staircase by which one can descend.
3. Well, popularly called S. Marcian's.
4. The centre of the church.
5. The tribune and its greater altar isolated.
6. The chair ascribed to S. Marcian.
7. Various side chapels.
8. The tomb of S. Marcian.
9. The column called St. John's.

In this subterranean building are seen various paintings of early epochs and beautiful cornices with white marble.

THE CELEBRATED CARVINGS IN S. MARCIAN

There are some very fine ancient carvings on the capitals of the columns, though the columns themselves are, unless my memory fails me, mostly built into piers, notably those identifying, as the guide pointed out in very funny language, the four Evangelists with the four beasts of the Apocalypse. He gave a wave of his hand and said, "S. John, the heagler; S. Mark"—and he gave a little smile—"S. Luak, the hengele; S. Mattew, the buhl." These carvings are fine and exceedingly curious, and he took priestly pride in them, but not so much pride as he took in a survival of the Temple of Bacchus in the church of S. Giovanni above—carvings of the wine god's jug and glass and bottle. Bacchus also has two Doric columns left.

THE CATACOMBS OF SYRACUSE

THE CATACOMBS OF SYRACUSE

From S. Marcian, that Christian church of 44 B.C., the guide conducted us into the catacombs. The catacombs of Syracuse are excellent for people who are afraid of the dark and of malaria in underground explorations. They are so thoroughly well ventilated and lighted now; if they have not been altered there never could have been much secrecy needed for the profession of Christianity at Syracuse. Witheridge thought the nicest thing about them was that they contained plenty of bones, and if you had a taste that way you could help yourself to as many as you pleased. He filled all his pockets with them except the one consecrated to his pocket-handkerchief. His idea was to use the small ones for penholders; I do not think he was sure what he was going to do with the larger ones, though a parasol handle for Stephana drifted across his mind. The guide said that the catacombs were cut out by the Greeks, four centuries before Christ, in the form of a cross, but that the south part was not excavated.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CATACOMBS

There were many mansions in this God's house for the Greek dead; long family vaults radiated from the principal chambers. In the family vaults there was generally an *arcosolio*, what we should call a lunette, for the head of the family, and smaller niches for the children. Sometimes in place of the lunette there would be a whole circle, like a rose window. Here and there was what the guide called a "chamber aristocratique for noble family," from which one or two sarcophagi had been taken—in the stupid way nations have—and transferred to the museum.

These catacombs owe their lightness and airiness to ancient air-holes shaped like a hop-grower's cowl or a Sicilian cistern. "This," said the guide, "is the round chapel of Antiocha." The fresco of a palm a little farther on, he told us, showed that a martyr was buried there. He was unable to assign any meaning or reason to a bastard Greek inscription painted in red. I do not think he could

IN SICILY

read the Greek characters. One of the chambers—the round chapel of Antiocha—I believe, was a very fine piece of quarrying, an absolutely symmetrical beehive. With the exception of a few bones and a small fresco or so, like the palm-tree, the tombs had been completely rifled, but there was a fine variety of them—niches of every shape, all of them once approached by marble steps, according to the guide. Witheridge muttered something about marble being cheaper than wood here, but the brown monk—Capuchin or whatever he was—remained perfectly impassive, without so much as a flicker of his iron foolish-virgins' lamp, and said he was going to show us another vault with a pillow of stone. For some reason or other he was diverted from this intention to a long vault, which had fourteen graves ranged side by side like so many coffins. One of them was covered with a terra-cotta lid, which the guide said was especially interesting because a Christian must have slept on it. The Christians, he said, in those times always slept on graves. Then he took us off to inspect an "aristocratique chamber much fresco—peacock outside—sign of noble—much blacked by Christians living in it—cross on roof, sign of earth." If the Christians' lamps were as badly trimmed as the monk's, the blacking can be understood. The catacombs, he said, extended a kilometre each way. I could form no idea of how many there were, including cross passages. The beauty of their quarrying was remarkable; it was as regular as fine masonry.

The catacombs of Syracuse are far superior to the famous catacomb of S. Calixtus at Rome, though they are not so rich in Christian emblems, such as palms and peacocks. Some fine and interesting catacombs, unfortunately rifled of their contents, were opened up in the spring of 1900 by Professor Orsi in the field between the Villa Politi and the railway.

SAN GIOVANNI

S. Giovanni is one of the most beautiful mediæval ruins in Syracuse, or rather I should say of Syracuse, because it is a very long way outside the walls of the present city. It has a great west gable of considerable elegance standing up gaunt against the sky, like the transept of

SAN GIOVANNI

Much Wenlock Abbey. This contains one of the rose windows so popular in Sicily. But it is the arcade outside the south door which is so wonderfully graceful that it is one of the favourite artists' bits in the island. The older parts of S. Giovanni date from 1182, and, according to Murray, the subterranean church of S. Marcian can never have seen St. Paul, because it was not founded till the fourth century after Christ, and Murray has a way of being right in such matters. We did not go over S. Giovanni the last time we were at Syracuse. We were just like all the other tourists, we lingered about the catacombs, drawing out that English-speaking guide, until we were late for lunch, and had to scuttle home taking only a flying look at the mellow old church, looking, except for the clump of prickly-pear outside, as mediæval as La Rabida when it welcomed Christopher Columbus. Prickly-pears were not known in Europe till they were introduced from America.



SAN GIOVANNI

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ANCIENT GREEK CASTLE OF EURYALUS

ONE of the famous excursions for even "transients," as Stephana calls them, is the drive out to the Greek castle of Euryalus, the most perfect Greek fort in existence. But though it lies directly on the way to Euryalus, not one in a hundred of these transients visits the Palæstra, or Ginnasio, which is almost the best specimen we have left of the institutions so popular with the Romans, where physical and rhetorical training were given. About merely intellectual matters the Romans did not trouble themselves; they were even more practical than Americans, who enjoy taking a bird's-eye view of the intellectual movements of the day.

The building is popularly known as the Bagno di Diana, because the most beautiful and photographable bit in it is the flooded arena of a white marble lecture theatre. It is about the size of the ordinary lecture theatre at a London hospital, but for many a year, ever since it was excavated in 1864, it has been full of clear water a foot or two deep. Both in 1896 and 1898, when we were there, the Palæstra was in charge of a most intelligent *custode*, who busied himself with the cultivation of the aromatic and medicinal herbs, which grow like weeds in Sicily. But he was dead in 1900, though not of fever, they said.

Possibly it was a precautionary measure, because the Bagno di Diana, with its stagnant though clear water, is reputed to be one of the few malarious spots round Syracuse, and poor Sicilians always dose themselves for fever. Every herb has its recognised position in their pharmacopeia; they can tell you its medicinal value where they

THE PALÆSTRA

cannot tell you its name, though they generally know both. In any Sicilian town there are herb shops, and truly the way in which herbs grow in Sicily, both wild and in gardens, is astonishing. This *custode* pointed us out, within a few yards of the Bagno, wild mint, and a large, coarse variety which may be called horse-mint, and peppermint. He said the fever season lasted four or five months in the year. The Palæstra, it must be borne in mind, is near the fatal marshes of Lysimeleia, which lie round the mouth of the Anapo.

The Palæstra was originally a large rectangular building of white marble. Most of its marbles have been carried off long since to adorn villas, or gardens, or churches, and much of the more solid part of the building went to Charles V.'s fortifications.

There are still considerable remains *in situ* on two sides of the covered gallery which ran all round the building, but the most considerable standing fragment is that of a sweet, little white marble *bibliotheca*, or library, which even goes so far as to have a bit of its architrave left. Stephana formed an idea that the pool in the lecture theatre got its name of Diana's Bath from the maidenhair growing so thickly between the glistening marble slabs of the horseshoe steps which rose from it in tiers. This was poetical, but inconsistent with the Sicilian name of the most delicate and feminine of ferns. They do not call it maidenhair, but Venus's hair—*capello di Venere*. And, the name notwithstanding, the Palæstra has no earthly connection with Diana.

I have seen few things so instinct with peace and beauty as the Palæstra was on that March Sunday morning when we took Witheridge and Stephana there; there was such a glitter on the water, and the long wall of Neapolis behind looked so white against the green, green clover. Witheridge was just like a schoolboy, jumping down from the tall white marble steps of the stylobate of the great hall which runs from end to end of the Palæstra. On the side towards the present railway station, between it and the station, is a fine fragment of the Wall of Dionysius. Along that side of the hall are still considerable remains of the corridor which formerly ran all round the Palæstra and under the Wall of Dionysius. The

IN SICILY

road from this part of ancient Syracuse swept round this angle of the corridor to the temple of the Olympian Jove.

The guide explained what each ruined chamber had been used for at great length. Stephana had an American appetite for theories about ancient buildings. For my part, I was content to watch the public school boy and Witheridge washing their hands in the shallow impluvium of the Palæstra, and the green lizards darting between the carvings of the marble soffits and cornices and capitals queerly mingled with splendid Spanish coats-of-arms and other Renaissance marbles. The best pieces, of course, were the exhumed statues, and inscriptions which have been carried off to the museum. But the marble foundations are very extensive and perfect, and with such a background as they have—a dark, thick-leaved carob tree, casting a gracious shade, grey-green old prickly-pears, the fresh young green of almond trees in spring, brown vineyards studded with the dark truncheons of old vines and bordered with donax—they are most impressive.

The fine fragment of a library dates from the time of Timoleon. In fact the present Palæstra stands for the most part on the site of the Timolonteum, the Palæstra built specially in Timoleon's honour, which received his tomb. His tomb is considered by Professor Orsi, the learned Director of the Syracuse Museum, to have been somewhere near the part of the present ruin known as the Biblioteca. Visitors should be most particular not to miss the Palæstra in an ancient Greek city. Young Greeks of means spent their entire day at the Palæstra. It was their form of sport, and they devoted their lives to sport. It is perhaps not of much consequence that the splendid fragment of the corridor at the end, some ten feet high, has been stripped of the marble with which the Romans decorated it, for the grand Greek masonry in which no lime or mortar was used is exposed.

The Romans clamped their marble together with lead; you can see the lead still in the marble of the architrave. Half of the Palæstra has been left in sweet disorder, with here a bit of the soffit, there great boulders of concrete torn from some ceiling. This part



Phot. H. H. H.

THE AMPHITHEATRE, THE PALAESTRA OR GYMNASIO FOUNDED TO CONTAIN THE FOUNTAIN OF TIVOLI,
SHOWING THE POOL, CALLED THE BATH OF DIANA

THE TEMPLE OF CERES AND PROSERPINE

is overgrown with huge acanthus and feathery camphor plants, and candy-tuft, to which the Sicilians give the name of honey-flower, as well as to the yellow-flowering shrub which is so common a feature in Australian gardens.

There is a clear aqueduct of limpid, bubbling water running through it, and all day long and far into the night its frogs sing the song which Aristophanes imitated so successfully.

A curious thing happened when we had been there a little time; the *custode* suddenly said, "You had another lady and another boy with you when you were here two years ago. Where are they now?" and described them quite accurately. I said, "The lady is at the hotel, but the boy is in England. He is a clerk in a bank now." "Oh, then he must be very rich now!"

At the gate we found our cabby with the white horse; he was very pleased to see us, and still better not to have seen us for so long, for he was making money at the rate of a franc and a half an hour while we were waiting. He had taken us under his protection, because he had been in England. "What part of England have you been to?" Stephana asked him in Italian. "Malta," he said, and nothing would persuade him that Malta was not part of England. He said everything was England that belonged to England; so it was clear that the Falkland Islands would have served, except that Syracuse is only six hours from Malta and six months from the Falklands.

On the principle of making us waste as much time as possible, he drew up at the Campo Santo, which we had to pass on the road to Euryalus, and when we said that we did not care about any Campo Santo, exclaimed in a voice of antiquarian expostulation, "But the Roman ruins, signor." There certainly were some Greek foundations. But one gets used to them at Syracuse. Baedeker calls them the Temple of Ceres and Proserpine, but they are undoubtedly part of the fortifications of Dionysius—the best-preserved fragment.

IN SICILY

THE TOMBS OF MODERN SYRACUSE—THE PART OF THE CEMETERY WHERE ART IS APPLIED

Having taken the trouble to dismount, we naturally went into the Campo Santo, which from the outside is very solemn and Eastern looking. Inside, near the gate, we received a severe shock. "Well, I'm blessed!" said Witheridge, "to think that one should have come to ancient Syracuse to see photography applied to cemetery purposes!"

We were indeed in ancient Syracuse, the true Greek Syracuse, and the applied photography to which he referred consisted of atrocious enlargements, a foot or more across, of the deceased's vignette, generally sunk in a circular or oval depression and glazed over. These were the tombs of the poorer people, and the tombs of the better-off were not a bit better, the vignette of the deceased being carved in high or low relief in exactly the same costume as he would wear in a photograph. One man, for instance, was sculptured in a billy-cock hat, and another with a scarf-pin in his tie, very badly placed, and a bouquet in his button-hole.

Coming to emblematic tombs, lamps were very fashionable, and there were a good many lizards and wild flowers, and one, at any rate, life-sized bronze angel.

THE PART OF THE CEMETERY ABANDONED TO NATURE

But it was only the better-kept part of the cemetery which grated so upon our artistic sensibilities. The back part, where graves were left to bounteous and tasteful Nature as she manifests herself in Italy, was simply delightful, reminding the traveller of the new cemetery under the shadow of the Olympian Zeus at Athens. There you could hardly see the tombstones for the tangles of roses; and the paths in between were like hay meadows purpled with the great Sicilian anemone and glowing with the adonis, whose scarlet petals and apple-green fringy leaves make it one of the most brilliant spots of colour, even in a Sicilian meadow. And when Proserpine comes up from the nether world each spring with her arms full of flowers, she scatters them so profusely over the fields of her native Sicily that

OLD OLIVES ON THE ROAD TO THE CASTLE

she seems to stint the rest of the world. That Campo Santo marks the beginning of the meadow-lands of Syracuse, which astonished even Witheridge and Stephana, accustomed to the glories of the American spring.

"We can do the flowers all right," said Witheridge, "and I daresay go one better, but we don't have olives of that age sticking out of them. I daresay they have got trees somewhere here under which Mopsus wrote those eclogue things."

"It was Theocritus, Ralph, not Mopsus."



Photo by Camp.

OLD OLIVES ON THE WAY TO THE CASTLE OF EURYALUS

"Well, that's all right. I expect they have got the tree, and there's a guide hanging around somewhere to show us to it. Ask the hack-man, Steph, will you?"

"Steph" tried, but this was beyond her powers in Italian, and with New England downrightness she made no attempt to cover her failure beyond protesting that she preferred the almond trees interspersed among the olives and carobs. But Witheridge was brutally practical, and, though he admitted that on a moderately warm day

IN SICILY

he might have played his singing match for a goat and a wooden basin under the elegant shadow of the pure green almond foliage, said that for real business use he preferred a carob tree, whose close dark foliage is the most grateful object in the landscape to man and beast in the Sicilian summer.

The fact remains that half the beauty of these flower-covered Sicilian meadows lies in the way that these picturesque trees and fragments of the rock, on which Epipolæ stood and the Wall of Dionysius was built, crop out.

AT THE CASTLE OF EURYALUS

The road to Euryalus I shall not describe until the chapter which deals with the wild flowers of Syracuse. Quite suddenly the cabby with the white horse recommended us to dismount and take a short cut up a stony lane to the castle. I wondered what he was up to. It was so entirely against his usual policy to wish to save time. He got there, if anything, rather before us, and, as Witheridge said, felt as happy as a nigger while he made the white folk walk.

At the Castle of Euryalus we found the same *custode* who had shown us over it two years before. He asked us about the other boy without the shortest delay, and, when he had talked to us a little while, he said, "You came here twice last time. Where are the English ufficiali?" We then remembered that we had brought two English officers from Malta, a fact which we had totally forgotten until he reminded us.

Easy as it is of access, an English visitor is not often enough in Sicily to be easily forgotten by a *custode* at an out-of-the-way place. Parts of the Castle of Euryalus, which are still standing, look much fresher than the Oxford Colleges of Queen Anne's day. All the damage was done as far back as the time of Archimedes by the Consul Marcellus, the conqueror of Syracuse.

EURYALUS IS NOT LABDALON

Stephana has the prettiest flush in the world when she is carried away by a great enthusiasm, and I saw the flush rising as she asked

EURYALUS IS NOT LABDALON

the *custode* if this was not Labdalon—the position so heroically stormed by the Athenians, whose fortification so nearly led to the capture of Syracuse. The *custode*, of course, agreed with her, as it was not for him to belittle the famous ruin entrusted to his charge by discouraging plausible suggestions such as this. Baedeker, however, with brutal German directness, places the fortress of Labdalon half-way between this point and the point where the road to Catania intersects the city wall. Stephana's blush became her, so that I had not the heart to undeceive her, but let her go on picturing the fierce Lamachus storming the brow with his Athenian hoplites, and entrenching himself for the night in the sort of crater at the top, where we were going to have afternoon tea.

Also Vincenzo Politi, in his delightful Syracusan guide published in the year that I was born, records the tradition, which has always obtained in Syracuse itself, that the Castle of Euryalus is the Labdalon of Lamachus, and it is to the family Politi more than anyone else that Sicily owes the preservation of her traditions. But scholars are unanimous in placing Labdalon nearer Syracuse, on the site given in Baedeker, though it is a low ridge commanded by missiles from above. They are not even certain that the Euryalus of Thucydides was not on the hill called Telegrafo, instead of its present site. The buildings we see to-day were built by the tyrant Dionysius, thirteen years after the siege.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE CASTLE OF EURYALUS

The interest in the Castle of Euryalus begins at the second ditch. You do not realise that there is a first ditch, and the second ditch does not look like a ditch any longer. It is, in fact, more like a sunken court protected by a cross wall of heavy masonry, now entered by the little gate with the Sicilian padlock on it in the foreground of the illustration. From this court—which in its old ditch days was crossed by a drawbridge supported by the tall stone pier, which rises from its centre, with stones as fresh as if they had been built since Nelson's day—various passages lead off, those going toward the right of the picture, to which you have to descend, prove to be mere vaults

IN SICILY



Photo by Sommer.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE CASTLE OF EURYALUS

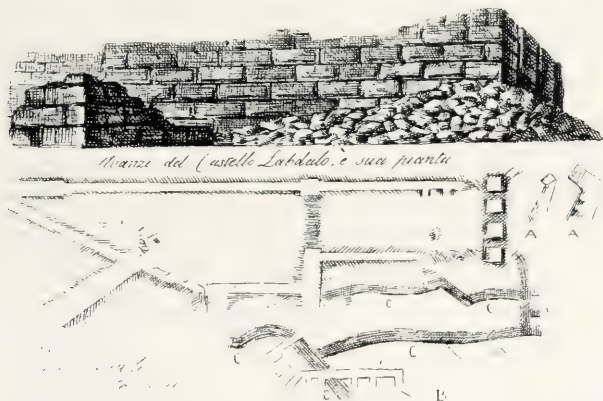
some fifteen yards long for provisions or ammunition. They contain inscriptions in an unknown language, unknown to local antiquaries. From the walls above springs a wild fig tree—the classical appendage of Sicilian ruins. The passages on the left hand, which connect with each other, are passages hewn in the rocks in the manner of modern fortresses, like Gibraltar, to enable the men in the court to retreat into the keep of the fortress. With this they communicate by a circuitous and easily blocked approach. Until the invention of the most modern artillery they must have been bomb-proof, and one of them is spacious enough for four horsemen to ride abreast with lances raised. Another is a stable. This shows how very far advanced were the military engineers who built the Castle of Euryalus, four centuries before Christ. These galleries in the rock

PLAN OF THE CASTLE

are beautifully cut and are still perfectly dry. In the day when it was built, "Mongibellisi," as the natives call it, must have been impregnable.

LIKE THE CASTLE OF S. ANDREW'S

There is one passage curiously like the secret passage which leads into the Castle of S. Andrew's, with the same tricks for preventing a surprise. There is a *corpo de guardia* and a niche where, according to the guide-books, the sentinel could lie, or rather sit, and wait; but



PLAN OF THE CASTLE OF EURVALUS

AA are the two outer ramparts, divided by the great ditch. B is what the *custode* wrongly calls Hexapylon.
CC are the secret underground galleries hewn in the rock.

the *custode* scoffed at this, and said, "Letto,"—bed—"one, two, yes; sentinel seat immaginazione." The finest passage of all is one about a furlong in length, which leads from the main fortress to the outwork on the north-west, wrongly called by the guide Zapylon (Hexapylon).

THE KEEP OF A GREEK CASTLE

Imposing as the great court called the second ditch and these splendid galleries are, it cannot be denied that the most majestic part

IN SICILY

of the whole fortress is the piece of wall surmounted by the five solid towers which crown the apex of the hill. The masonry is so massive and splendid. These towers stand above the second ditch and guard that end of the crater alluded to above, and their old, yellow stone is set off by the most extraordinary blaze of wild marigolds, almost vermilion in their depth of colour, which I ever saw. Sicily is of course the land of the marigold. It blazes with marigolds as Japan



Photo by Sommer.

THE TOWERS OF THE CASTLE OF ERYALUS

blazes with the scarlet azalea in the spring. Inside, every chink of the fortress is filled with the yellow flower of the rue, with yellow and white, scarlet, yellow, and crimson and puce vetches, and glorious purple and white tares, while from the turf spring the deep pink anemone and the tall asphodel.

The curious crater-like depression which forms the keep is triangular in shape, and terminates in another tower-like mass of masonry known as the *punta*. This keep, like every other defensible fortress, contains a round cistern-like *pozzo*, or well, now dry. It is

FREEMAN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CASTLE

extremely beautiful, for its flower-studded lawns rise gently to the five solid towers at the highest point and the minor fortifications at the apex of the triangle. Among the masses of stone fallen outwards from the ruined walls grows, besides the vetches and the rue and the blue germanders and masses of a small purple campanula, the handsome and conspicuous pale yellow flower which looks like a *calceolaria*, but is really a sage, and grows so profusely on Mount Lycabettus at Athens. The yucca-like tufts of the wild onion rise everywhere from the fields sown with stones which surround the castle.

One of the best-known passages of Freeman's great *History of Sicily* is that in which he describes the Castle of Euryalus :—

“The experience of that time led him (Dionysius) to see that Euryalus, the key of Epipolai and of all Syracuse, must be made into a strong fortress. And large remains of a strong fortress are there. At the narrow neck which joins the triangle of Epipolai to the hill to the west, the height, as in many other parts, rises in two stages with a terrace between. The upper ridge is narrow indeed ; it is on the ridge itself, just to the east of its narrowest point, where the isthmus first begins to lose itself in the general mass of the hill, that the fortress of Dionysius arose, with the ditch that forms its first defence across the very narrowest part of the ridge. The visitor from modern Syracuse, unless he has made a toilsome march over the whole length of the hill, will approach the Castle of Euryalus from the west, as if he were an enemy advancing to test the strength of the engineering works of the tyrant. The modern road at the foot of the hill climbs it at this point, and brings him in front of the best-preserved part of the castle, five towers of fine masonry, placed closely side by side, and with two deep ditches in front of them. The rest of the fortress is less perfect. Taking the group of towers as the centre, it sends forth two branches to the north and south-east, to the points where the wall of Epipolai, north and south, parts from the castle to run its own course along the brow of the hill. An outpost of very irregular shape stands out to the north-west, near the point where the Athenians had climbed up. The works on the south side, where at this point the ascent is easier than on the north, are also

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of a remarkable shape. Taken as a whole, they form a long and very irregular triangle ; but this is made up of a nearly rectangular court adjoining the towers, connected by a small gate with its lintel with an irregular polygon to the east. The extreme eastern point of this building is one of the most striking that Syracuse can supply. It is the centre of the Syracusan territory, commanding the full view of the city and her belongings in the widest sense. The windings and different heights of the hill itself bring into view the greater part of the south side, and some points on the north ; the Island is full in sight, with the Great Harbour and all that surrounds it, the plain, the isthmus, and the hills with their steep bluffs which seem to guard them. Between those hills and the more rugged bluff of Hybla, we get a glimpse of the ways that open to the inland regions of Sicily, to the outpost of Akrai and to the inner depths of the Sikel land. But the wonders of the Castle of Dionysius are not all above ground. Beneath the towers and in front of them are underground chambers and passages, which at first sight it is tempting to look upon as primæval works turned to account by Greek engineers, but which have so clear a reference to the buildings above that one is driven to conclude that they are all parts of the same work. Of several such passages, the longest and most remarkable is that which leads from the great ditch in front of the towers to the northern fort. A shorter one also leads to the outer court on the south side. Special care is taken not to carry any of these underground works under the group of towers, so as not to endanger the strength of their foundations. By works like these, if an enemy had taken an outpost, he might still be attacked, like Veii in the story of Camillus, by a party making its way through the bowels of the earth. Some of the chambers were seemingly used as storehouses, and mysterious characters are carved by the entrance of one of them which are held to be figures in some unknown system of notation. Elsewhere rings seem to show places for tying up horses : such a retreat might well be needful when the garrison was hard pressed. The whole fortress is the most unique and the most striking of all the monuments of Syracuse, as the place where it stands is the most striking of all the points of view."

THE WALL OF DIONYSIUS

THE VIEW FROM THE TOWERS

It is worth while to climb the five great towers and look over the sea of stones on which the mainland-four-fifths of ancient Syracuse stood. On your right, like a great inland cape, rise the honey-bearing hills of Hybla, beyond the waters of the Great Harbour of antiquity. On your left is the open sea, and over your shoulder Etna rising like the Great Pyramid on a clear evening.

Between you and Etna, in the olive garden of Baron Targia, is the isolated plateau of rock upon which Marcellus pitched his camp—a plateau so difficult of access that by setting a herd to watch the one spot where its sides are not precipitous, it can be used as a fold. Near it are a few Roman buildings. To approach it from above you can either take a path near the little postern in the splendid fragment of the Wall of Dionysius, north of the Castle of Euryalus, or go down the Scala Greca. It is difficult to restrain one's language when speaking of these two monuments of the almost Roman greatness of the Syracusan Greeks. The Wall of Dionysius, which encircled the whole of the ancient city as far as the Castle of Euryalus, is built of blocks a yard and a half long, and half a yard wide and high, and is said to have been built to the extent of three and a half miles in twenty days with the aid of 60,000 workmen and 6,000 oxen. The average thickness of the wall is about nine feet, but it varies from six to fourteen feet. It is supposed to have been about twenty feet high. The best place to study its masonry is in the portion exhumed outside the Campo Santo, the most imposing portion is a little north of the Castle of Euryalus.

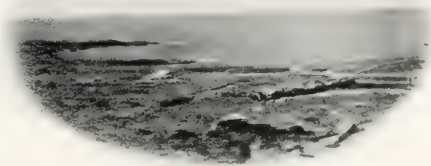


Photo by the Author.

THE HARBOUR OF LEON.

IN SICILY

The Scala Greca is a staircase cut in the rock not far from the two little boat-harbours—horseshoe-shaped indentations in the flat rock—where the Athenians landed the men who seized Labdalon. After

scaling the almost precipitous sea face of the rocky plateau of Epipolæ, the stair soon turns into a road cut, Greek fashion, in the solid rock, and reverting to a stair whenever a sudden rise requires it. I have traced it for a mile or two. It is the most considerable and perfect Greek road which I saw in Sicily. The best way to reach the Scala Greca

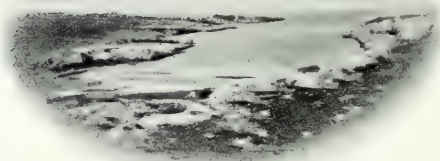


Photo by the Author.

THE LITTLE HARBOUR, TROGLUS

is to drive along the Catania road. It is situated a few furlongs beyond the point where Professor Orsi has recently discovered a curious cave-shrine like the Adytum of the Eumenides at Athens. The Hexapylon where Marcellus stormed the city must, I think, have been near here, and I have no doubt that the remains of an ancient gate, where three roads meet at the top of the slope, formed the Catania Gate of Syracuse. The ancient Greek road to Catania, which can be traced to the edge of Achradina, passed through it. It runs parallel to the modern road on the edge of the ditch for a long way. The guide-books make no mention of this Catania Gate, but it is very easy to make out and difficult to dispute. Freeman has discussed the origin of the name Hexapylon and the arguments bearing on its site. I will refer those who wish to thrash the matter out to his *History of Sicily*. It is difficult to believe that the superb fortress of Euryalus, with its passages portholed for defence, and its breastworks cut from the solid rock showing plainly the marks of the chisel, and with its staircases ingeniously adapted for men or horses, could have been built in the fifth century before Christ; but it was. And almost the

THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE BY THE ATHENIANS

only finger-marks of time upon it are a patch of maidenhair here and there, and the rows of asphodels rising like ostrich feathers against the pure blue sky.

STEPHANA'S DIARY

We lingered long in the old Greek castle that afternoon. The air was so delightful, neither warm nor cold, and at Syracuse we never took any precautions like coming in at sunset for fear of malaria. We never thought about malaria there, though one of our party did catch it in the marshy land outside in 1896. And Stephana was so enchanted with Euryalus. She had brought her diary with her; it had a lock, and the *custode* was as pleased as a child when she touched a spring in a large sort of marquise ring made of a scarab, and took out from it a little gold key to unlock the precious volume in which I would dare swear there was nothing that could not meet the public eye. She jotted down religiously everything the guide told her, whether he was pointing out the crimson blossoms of the orpine, which grows in the Italian parts of Devonshire, as *orpina salvaggia*, or pointing out the fine fragment of the Wall of Dionysius, with a tree growing from its top, which lies a little to the north of the castle.

Then she turned to me, "Now tell me all about the siege of Syracuse by the Athenians—all Thucydides wrote about it."

"Shall I begin at the beginning?"

"Yes, tell me everything."

"Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the history of the war in which the Peloponnesians and the Athenians fought against each other. He began to write when they first took up arms, believing that it would be great and memorable above any previous war."

"Oh, I don't mean all that—just the part about Syracuse."

"That would take me all day."

"Don't be provoking, Signor, tell me just what I want to know."

"Well, the whole thing is very much disputed, but Freeman, who knew more about Sicily than anybody else, places the first Athenian camp on the high ground above the Great Harbour, a little beyond the Anapo and those columns of the temple of the Olympian

IN SICILY

Jove which you see away down on the right. Their headquarters afterwards were in a circular fort about half-way between this Castle of Euryalus and the Cappuccini convent. From this they tried to build a wall down to the Great Harbour on our right and the open sea on our left, so as to shut the Syracusans off from any relief by land, trusting to their fleet to hold the seas. To make this wall useless, the Syracusans built three counter-walls, the first from the wall of the Temenites, a little above the Greek theatre, almost due west to the edge of the rocky plateau; the second from a little below the theatre to the River Anapo, just above its junction with the Cyane; and the third from the quarter of the city known as Tyche, a little south of the Scala Greca, to the Castle of Euryalus here. It was this wall which finally defeated the Athenians by cutting them off from the open sea, and making them keep their ships in the Great Harbour where they were eventually blockaded and annihilated, and shutting them off from the direct route to Catane—that's Catania, their ally, where they could have taken refuge. The only other thing I've got to say is that the war lasted from 415 to 413 B.C. That isn't much of an account of it, but it gives you an idea of it topographically, all I can venture to do on such a debatable theme."

"Is that the wall of Gylippus we see down there on our left, that big bit with the stone pine springing from it?"

"No; that is the great Wall of Dionysius, who built the castle, though very likely he made use of the work of Gylippus in places."

We had not noticed that Witheridge had for once been taking an interest in what we were saying till he broke in with, "Well, all I can say is, that I like the cheek of these Athenians thinking that they were going to capture a city as big as themselves all that distance off by sea."

"Poor Athenians!" said Stephana regretfully. Athens, with all her faults, has won the undying love of women.

WE DRIVE BACK TO SYRACUSE IN THE EVENING

As we drove back, the coachman having noticed my eagerness for information thought he would give me a little, couched as far as

PLAN OF THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE



PLAN OF THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE BY THE ATHENIANS

In the translation (1676 edition) of Thucydides, executed by the famous Thomas Hobbes, author of *The Leviathan*. No other plan gives such a good presentment at once of the contour of the country and the operations of the Athenians.

possible in his imitation-Maltese-English, which I shall not attempt to reproduce. The sunset-tinted shoulder of Etna, with its black lava epaulettes, he did not think worthy of comment, but he showed me a train and some lemons, the latter of which he offered to steal, and a wild pear, one great spike of minute white blossoms, something like a blackthorn, which he called piranio, probably incorrectly. The long, grey Wall of Dionysius, under whose shadow we drove for so much of the way back, he did not notice, but the pink Palermo-like villa of a certain baron, who also was, or had been, Mayor of Syracuse, he pointed out with much pride, on account of the dignitary, its master. We did not care about the dignitary, but such a carob tree grew in the garden, and such a stone pine rose

IN SICILY

against the sky above the villa, and such yellow and white snapdragons sprang from the garden walls, that we were visibly impressed, and he drove on thinking that the English were not such fools after all. He drove on, past the flowery meadows with their olive and almond trees, past the Arab-looking Campo Santo, black in the shades of evening, until the smell of the baskets of lemon peel, and the approach of the officers of the Dazio Consumo, with their long spits, told us that we were at the threshold of the city. They did not stick their spits into us, or even into Stephana's tea-basket, though they prod almost everything in the shape of a basket or a sack which a native may be taking into the city in their zeal to collect the *octroi*. Foreigners are too precious.

The latter part of our drive had been very slow, because we had been threading our way through flocks of heavy-uddered goats, which brought the "ite domum saturæ, venit nox, ite capellæ" of the *Eclogues* more forcibly than ten years of studying Virgil at school and Oxford.

When we came to the Green, which would be immortally like Shepherd's Bush Green if it were not for mediæval Syracuse rising behind its triple rim of moats, we turned to the left to go to our hotel away in the silence of the Latomia, just where a column and an attempt at a column rise amid the laundresses. "What is that?" I asked of the omniscient cabman. "That, Signore," he said, "is the Roman temple," and pointed to the bases of two more columns, hardly distinguishable in the short Sicilian twilight. I knew, of course, that it was a Greek market-place, the Agora of ancient Syracuse, but it was of no good telling him so. I only asked him to learn what was the common people's tradition about the place. In Sicily the very poorest people are apt to have a name for every ancient stone.

CHAPTER XVII.

ABOUT DIONYSIUS, PLATO'S VISITS TO SYRACUSE, AND THE PART PLAYED BY WOMEN AT SYRACUSE

DIONISIO—DIONYSIUS—WHO WAS HE ?

AFTER dinner, instead of her usual walk on the terrace with Witheridge, which might have been intended to give him his proper status as her fiancé, and was unquestionably not uninfluenced by her love of the open air, she came over to me as I was struggling with my letters and newspapers and said, "I am not quite clear about Dionysius; he seems to have gone on for the best part of a century at Syracuse as a kind of king."

"There were two," I said; "the first, who was only a clerk in a public office, though he is said to have been of aristocratic birth, played upon the banalities of a democracy with the assurance of the Neapolitan who turns the handle of a street piano. He took part in conducting various expeditions against the Carthaginians with no conspicuous success beyond convincing the Syracusans that he would have succeeded if it had not been for the incompetence and corruption and treachery of his colleagues. When he had exhausted the list, he received the sole appointment. His next step was to say that his life was in danger, and to form a picked bodyguard of one thousand men. After this it was easy to make himself despot of Syracuse. Then he set about fortifying the city against the Carthaginians, the *bêtes noires* of the Syracusans, for whom all his moves had been tolerated. The Castle of Euryalus, and the long walls which made Syracuse the greatest city of the Greek

IN SICILY

world, you have seen this afternoon. The citadel in which the defences culminated was the Island of Ortygia. Here he made his residence and admitted none but the adherents whom he could trust. It was a citadel much more against the citizens than against the Carthaginians. Here he reigned in royal splendour for about forty years, though he was only officially recognised as tyrannus. He



THE ISLAND OF ORTYGIA IN NELSON'S TIME

From "*Antichi Monumenti Siracusani*," by Vincenzo Periti, 1856

was perfectly unscrupulous in politics, but he was a man of cultivated and refined tastes; his poems were recited at the Olympic Games, and after frequently taking the second and third prizes for the Tragedy at Athens, he got the first prize with his *Ransom of Hector* just before his death. But his crowning connection with literature was of course his connection with Plato, in which this greatest of the princes of Syracuse anticipated Alexander's connection with Aristotle."

PLATO'S THREE VISITS TO SYRACUSE

It is a fact generally overlooked that the most remarkable incidents in Plato's life were his three visits to Syracuse. Plato, whose real name was Aristocles (and there would have been a mighty confusion if he had not changed it, as Witheridge said), took a voyage to Sicily in B.C. 389, from a curiosity to see Mount Etna. It so chanced that there was living at Syracuse a disciple of his called Dion. What followed I must leave Plutarch to tell, as Englished by Sir Thomas North.*

* Quoted from the Life of Dion in Temple Classics Edition in ten volumes (price 1s. 6d. each), published by J. M. Dent and Co.

PLATO AND DIONYSIUS I.

PLATO INTRODUCED TO DIONYSIUS I. BY DION

"Dion, who was but a young man at that time, but yet had an apter wit to learn, and readier good-will to follow virtue, than any young man else that followed Plato; as Plato himself writeth, and his own doings also do witness. For Dion having from a child been brought up with humble conditions under a tyrant, and acquainted with a servile timorous life, with a proud and insolent reign, with all vanity and curiosity, as placing chief felicity in covetousness; nevertheless, after he had felt the sweet reasons of philosophy, teaching the broad way to virtue, his heart was inflamed straight with earnest desire to follow the same. And because he found that he was so easily persuaded to love virtue and honesty, he simply thinking (being of an honest plain nature) that the self same persuasions would move a like affection in Dionysius; obtained of Dionysius, that being at leisure, he was contented to see Plato, and to speak with him. When Plato came to Dionysius, all their talk in manner was of virtue, and they chiefly reasoned what was fortitude; where Plato proved that tyrants were no valiant men. From thence passing farther into justice, he told him that the life of just men was happy, and contrarily the life of unjust men unfortunate. Thus the tyrant Dionysius perceiving he was overcome, durst no more abide him, and was angry to see the standers-by to make such estimation of Plato, and that they had such delight to hear him speak. At length he angrily asked him what business he had to do there. Plato answered him. He came to seek a good man. Dionysius then replied again, What, in God's name, by thy speech then it seemeth thou hast found none yet."

DIONYSIUS SELLS PLATO INTO SLAVERY

"Now Dion thought that Dionysius' anger would proceed no farther, and therefore at Plato's earnest request, he sent him away in a galley with three banks of oars, the which Pollis a Lacedæmonian captain carried back again into Greece. Howbeit Dionysius secretly requested Pollis to kill Plato by the way, as ever he would

IN SICILY

do him pleasure ; if not, yet that he would sell him for a slave, howsoever he did. For said he, he shall be nothing the worse for that ; because if he be a just man, he shall be as happy to be a slave as a freeman. Thus, as it is reported, this Pollis carried Plato into the Isle of Ægina, and there sold him. For the Æginetes having war at that time with the Athenians, made a decree that all the Athenians that were taken in their isle, should be sold."

In spite of the fact of having been sold into slavery by Dionysius the elder, Plato was unable to turn a deaf ear when Dion requested him to come to the court of Dionysius the younger, and win him from his light ways.

PLATO'S FIRST VISIT TO DIONYSIUS THE YOUNGER

"Dion oftentimes rehearsing these exhortations unto Dionysius, and other while interlacing between, some reasons he had learned of Plato ; he grafted in him a wonderful, and as it were a vehement desire to have Plato in his company, and to learn of him. So sundry letters came from Dionysius unto Athens, divers requests from Dion, and great entreaty made by certain Pythagorean philosophers, that prayed and persuaded Plato to come into Sicily, to bridle the light disposition of this young man, by his grave and wise instructions ; who without regard of reason, led a dissolute and licentious life. Therefore Plato, as himself reporteth, blushing to himself, and fearing lest he should give men cause to think that it was but the opinion men had of him, and that of himself he was unwilling to do any worthy act ; and further, hoping that doing good but unto one man alone, who was the only guide of all the rest, he should as it were recover Sicily from all her corruption and sickness ; he performed their requests that sent unto him. . . . Now things being in this state, Plato arrived in Sicily, where he was marvellously received and honoured by Dionysius. For when he landed on the shore, leaving his galley that brought him ; there was ready for him one of the king's rich and sumptuous chariots to convey him to the castell ; and the tyrant made sacrifice to give the gods thanks for his coming, as for some wonderful

PLATO AGAIN VISITS SICILY

great good hap chanced unto his seigniory. Furthermore, the wonderful modesty and temperance that was begun to be observed in feasts and banquets, the court clean changed, and the great goodness and clemency of the tyrant in all things, in ministering justice to every man; did put the Syracusans in great good hope of change, and every man in the court was very desirous to give himself to learning and philosophy. So that, as men reported, the tyrant's palace was full of sand and dust, with the numbers of students that drew plates and figures of geometry. Shortly after Plato was arrived, by chance the time was come about to do a solemn sacrifice within the castell, at which sacrifice the herald (as the manner was) proclaimed aloud the solemn prayer accustomed to be done, that it would please the gods long to preserve the state of the tyranny; and that Dionysius, being hard by him, said unto him, What, wilt thou not leave to curse me? This word grieved Philistus and his companions to the heart, thinking that with time, by little and little, Plato would win such estimation and great authority with Dionysius that afterwards they should not be able to resist him; considering that in so short a time as he had been with Dionysius he had so altered his mind and courage."

Philistus, who was a historian, and his friends, succeeded in persuading Dionysius that Dion was a traitor. Dionysius deported him to Italy.

DIONYSIUS II'S LOVE FOR PLATO

"But now concerning Plato; when Dion was exiled, Dionysius caused him to be lodged in his castle, and by this means craftily placed, under cloak of friendship, an honourable guard about him, because he should not return into Greece to seek Dion, to tell him of the injury he had done unto him. Howbeit Dionysius, often frequenting his company (as a wild beast is made tame by company of man), he liked his talk so well, that he became in love with him, but it was a tyrannical love. For he would have Plato to love none but him, and that he should esteem him above all men living, being ready to put the whole realm into his hands, and all his forces; so that

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he would think better of him than of Dion. Thus was this passionate affection of Dionysius grievous unto Plato. For he was so drowned with the love of him, as men extremely jealous of the women they love; that in a moment he would sodainly fall out with him, and straight again become friends, and pray him to pardon him. And to say truly, he had a marvellous desire to hear Plato's philosophy; but on the other side, he reverenced them that did dissuade him from it, and told him that he would spoil himself, if he entered over-deeply into it. In the meantime fell out war, and thereupon he sent Plato away, promising him that the next spring he would send for Dion home."

THE SITE OF THE CASTLE OF DIONYSIUS

I have often wondered where this castle of Dionysius in which he entertained Plato was; I have never heard of there being any traces of it, but I imagine that it must have been on the site of the Castle of Maniace. We know that it was in the island, and no spot in the island is so favourable for a tyrant's stronghold as that occupied by the present castello, for it is on the extreme tongue of the island facing the opposite shore of Plemmyrium, and is washed by deep water on every side except where the moat cuts it off from the land.

If the chain across the harbour was fastened, it gave only the tyrant the opportunity of taking ship either inside the Great Harbour or on the open sea, in case of sudden attack. There is another passage in Plutarch's *Life of Dion* bearing on the subject: "The sea also beating against the walls of the castell, was as sweet to drink a whole day together as any conduit or running water, as those that tasted of it found it true."

Just outside the Castle of Maniace there is a very deep washing-pool of great antiquity fed by a strong spring. It is conceivable that this spring should, after a seismic disturbance, have found a new outlet in the actual sea adjoining the castle and have freshened its waters. It is believed that the legend of the river god Alpheus pursuing the fountain-nymph Arethusa arose from the fact that from time to time the sea where the fountain of Arethusa runs into it has

THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA

been made quite fresh by the eruption of a submarine spring. But it is not possible for the castle to have stood on the sea near the fountain of Arethusa, because that is the weakest position in the whole island—a flat shore dominated by a ridge of high ground and the eminence on which the Collegio stands. Dionysius, the inventor of catapults—the artillery of the ancients—would have seen to this.

There is no more trace of the Palace or Citadel of Dionysius in



THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA

Photograph

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the Island of Ortygia than there is of his tomb, which is said to have stood near the site of the modern prison. And I have never been able to make out any of the remains which still exist under water of the famous Marble Harbour, which he built for his navy where the modern ferry crosses from S. Lucia to the city, though the stone slips of the arsenal on which he built his triremes are some of them almost perfect in an enclosure near the railway. Nor is there, I think, any direct relic of Cicero, though many of the lions of Syracuse which he mentions are lions to-day. Some of the most striking portions of his oration against Verres refer to the looting at Syracuse, from which Verres carried off far more than Marcellus himself. And Cicero mentions Syracuse also in his *Republic* and other works. There is even less trace of a greater than any of them—the mighty Scipio who conquered Carthage. He made Syracuse the base of his expedition to Carthage, and was there for many months collecting troops and supplies and means of transport like another Kitchener. Even Pyrrhus and Hamilcar, so intimately connected with the north-west corner of the Island, are not to be compared with Scipio Africanus.

DIONYSIUS II. LONGS TO SEE PLATO AGAIN

It seems certain that Dionysius the younger, voluptuary that he was, had the strongest admiration and affection for Plato, as Plutarch says, “a sodain vehement desire took him in the head to have Plato again.”

“So he sought all the means and ways he could devise, to pray Archytas the Pythagorean philosopher to tell him, that he might boldly come, and to be his surety unto him for that he would promise him; for first of all, they were acquainted together by his means. Therefore Archytas sent thither Archidamus the Philosopher. Dionysius also sent certain galleys, and some of his friends thither, to pray Plato to come to him; and he himself wrote specially, and plainly, that it should not go well with Dion, if Plato came not into Sicily; but if he would be persuaded to come, that then he would do what he would have him. Many letters and requests came unto

PLATO'S THIRD VISIT TO SICILY

Dion from his wife, and sister, insomuch as Dion so used the matter, that Plato obeyed Dionysius, without making any excuse at all. So Plato writeth himself, That he was driven to come again the third time into the strait of Sicily

“To try if once again he could Charybdis’ dangers pass.”

HOW TRULY PLATO AND DIONYSIUS II. LOVED ONE ANOTHER

“Now Plato being arrived in Sicily, he made Dionysius a great joyful man, and filled all Sicily again with great good hope; for they were all very desirous, and did what they could, to make Plato overcome Philistus and the tyranny, with his philosophy. The women of Dionysius’ court did entertain Plato the best they could; but above all, Dionysius seemed to have a marvellous trust and affiance in him, and more than in any other of all his friends. For he suffered Plato to come to him without searching of him, and oftentimes offered to give him a great sum of money; but Plato would take none of it. Therefore Aristippus Cyrenian being at that time in the tyrant’s court in Sicily, said that Dionysius bestowed his liberality surely. For, to us that ask much he giveth little, and much unto Plato that requireth nothing. After Dionysius had given Plato his welcome, he began to move him again of Dion. Dionysius on the other side, at the first did use him with fine delays, but afterwards he shewed himself angry indeed; and at length fell out with Plato, but yet so covertly, that others saw it not. For Dionysius dissembled that, and otherwise in all other things he did him as much honour as he could devise, practising thereby to make him to forsake Dion’s friendship. Now Plato found him at the first, that there was no trust to be given to his words, and that all were but lies and devices he either said or did; howbeit he kept it to himself, and ever patiently bore all things, hoping for the best, and made as though he believed him. They two thus finely dissembling with each other, thinking to deceive all men, and that none should understand their secrets; Helicon Cyzicenian, one of Plato’s friends, did prognosticate the eclipse of the sun. The same falling out as he had prognosticated,

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the tyrant esteemed marvellously of him, and gave him a silver talent for his labour. Then Aristippus sporting with other philosophers, said he could tell them of a stranger thing to happen than that. So when they prayed him to tell them what it was: I do prognosticate, said he, that Plato and Dionysius will be enemies ere it be long. In the end it came to pass, that Dionysius made port-sale of all Dion's goods, and kept the money to himself, and lodged Plato, that before lay the next court to his palace, among the soldiers of his guard, whom he knew maliced him of long time, and sought to kill him: because he did persuade Dionysius to leave his tyranny and to live without his guard. Plato being in this instant danger, Archytas sent ambassadors forthwith unto Dionysius, in a galley of thirty oars, to demand Plato again; declaring that Plato came again to Syracuse, upon his word and caution. Dionysius to excuse himself, and to shew that he was not angry with him at his departure from him; he made him all the great cheer and feasts he could, and so sent him home with great shews of good-will. One day among the rest, he said unto Plato; I am afraid, Plato, said he, that thou wilt speak evil of me, when thou art among thy friends and companions in the Academy. Then Plato smiling, answered him again; The gods forbid that they should have such scarcity of matter in the Academy, so that they must needs talk of thee. Thus was Plato's return, as it is reported, although that which he himself writeth agreeth not much with this report. These things went to Dion's heart, so that shortly after he shewed himself an open enemy unto Dionysius, but specially when he heard how he had handled his wife. Plato under covert words, sent Dionysius word of it by his letters."

From this last sentence it is plain that Plato requited the wayward tyrant's affection. Dion from henceforth was his open enemy, and eventually invaded Syracuse, drove him out, and met his death there.

A NEW HISTORY OF GREECE FOR SICILY

"Fancy Plato at Syracuse," said Stephana. "They really ought to have a new history of Greece. Just as much seems to have

THE WOMEN OF ANCIENT SYRACUSE

happened in Sicily as in the proper Greece, and yet *The Student's Greece* dismisses it with about three entries." I urged her to rest tranquil, and leave the matter in the hands of the Sicilian historian Chiesi, who boldly advances the theory that Greek art and literature began in Sicily and not in Greece proper; "and," I added, "if Mr. Butler is right about a woman's having written the *Odyssey* at Trapani, very likely Signor Chiesi is right. The metopes of Selinunte are older than any metopes at Athens."

ON THE IMPORTANT PART PLAYED BY WOMEN AT SYRACUSE

The nature of some of the incidents prevented my drawing Stephana's attention to the most noticeable feature in which Syracuse contrasts with Athens, the part played by women in their respective histories. Almost the only woman you hear of in the history of Athens is Aspasia, the mistress of Pericles. While at Syracuse the influence of women is felt at every turn. One of the most notable novels of antiquity, as well as the most notable tyranny (in the sense of despotship) is connected with the daughters of Hermocrates, the brilliant and resourceful man who was more than anyone else responsible for the defeat of the Athenians. His historical daughter, whose name has been forgotten, married Dionysius the elder. Of her fate Plutarch speaks briefly but pregnantly: "Not being thoroughly settled in his *tyranny*, the Syracusans did rebel against him, and did so cruelly and abominably handle the body of his wife, that she willingly poisoned herself."



THE HEAD OF PROSERPINE ON A DECADRACHM
By Euzenetus, 4th century B.C., showing what the women of
SYRACUSE were like

To outrage the women of a banished enemy was the first revenge which suggested itself to a Syracusan. Arete, the daughter of

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Dionysius and niece of Dion, after being married to her half-brother Thearides, married her uncle, Dion. When Dion was in exile, Dionysius the younger, in consideration of his relationship to her, condemned her, instead of death or torture or fetters in a malarious dungeon, to marry Timocrates. When Dion came back from exile and drove Dionysius out he was met by his sister Aristomache, leading Dion's son in her hand, and her daughter Arete, who was at once his wife and his niece, followed weeping, "being very fearful how she should call and salute her husband, having lain with another man. Dion first spake to his sister, and afterwards to his son; and then Aristomache, offering him Arete, said unto him, 'Since thy banishment, O Dion, we have led a miserable and captive life; but now that thou art returned home with victory, thou hast rid us out of care and thralldom, and hast also made us again bold to lift up our heads, saving her here, whom I wretched creature have by force (thyself alive) seen married unto another man. Now then, sith fortune hath made thee lord of us all, what judgement givest thou of this compulsion? How wilt thou have her to salute thee, as her uncle or husband? As Aristomache spake these words, the water stood in Dion's eyes; so, he gently and lovingly taking his wife Arete by the hand, gave her his son, and willed her to go home to his house where he then remained, and so delivered the castell unto the Syracusans."

It was this same Arete, writing to Dion while he was in exile at Athens, that prevailed on Plato to come back to Syracuse for the third time.

HOW THE FAMILY OF DIONYSIUS INTERMARRIED

The family of Dionysius the elder were very intimately related to each other. After his first wife had poisoned herself he married on the same day a Locrian woman named Doris, and Aristomache, the daughter of Hipparinus, "the chiefest man in all Syracuse," father of the celebrated Dion. In Syracuse, the aristocracy, who were called *gamori*, or land-owners, were very powerful. Dion, even in exile, lived with all the state of a tyrant. Dionysius had

AN ANCIENT GREEK NOVEL

three children by Doris, the younger Dionysius being the eldest. As Aristomache continued barren, he concluded that Doris's mother was bewitching her, and, after he had put his mother-in-law to death, Aristomache certainly did bear him four children—a daughter, Sophrosyne, who married her half-brother Dionysius the younger; and Arete, who married first her half-brother Thearides, and then her uncle Dion; and two sons. It is not easy to picture anything much more romantic in Greek history than these proud, highly-bred Syracusan beauties, at one moment lapped in such luxury as Greece had never before known, and at the next enduring the worst things that could befall a woman for their husbands' sakes. What they did endure we know, not only from the biographical pages of Plutarch, but also, by great good luck, from the novel written by a man who calls himself Chariton of Aphrodisias, and states that he was the secretary of Athenagoras, the democratic leader in the Syracusan Assembly, who nearly brought Syracuse to ruin by opposing the wise precautions of Hermocrates against the Athenians. The speech is preserved by Thucydides.

FREEMAN'S ACCOUNT OF THE GREEK NOVEL ABOUT DIONYSIUS'S BEAUTIFUL SISTER-IN-LAW

"Hermocrates lives quietly on at Syracuse after the defeat of the Athenians. He has a daughter of wonderful beauty, Kallirh e by name, who is sought in marriage, like another Agariste of Sikyon, by many private men and many sons of tyrants. The names of these tyrants have dropped out of Sicilian history. The thought of Epeiros may have been suggested by several later events, or even because Agariste had a Molottian wooer. There was also a certain Chaireas, whose beauty equalled that of Achilleus or Alkibiades; he was son of Ariston, the man next in eminence to Hermocrates in Syracuse, but opposed to him in politics. In him one seems to see the Corinthian Ariston turned into a Syracusan. Youth and maid meet by chance; mutual love follows; Chaireas has no hope of the daughter of his father's rival; but the two are betrothed by a kind of irregular decree of the Syracusan people assembled in the theatre. *A nomimos*

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ecclesia is held, and the debate takes this unexpected turn. The two are married, to the wrath of the suitors, the tyrant of Akragas and the son of the tyrant of Rhegion among them. Many strange things happen. Kallirh   is buried alive; she is carried off from her tomb by a pirate, Theron. She comes near to Athens, where there are archons more stern—at least to evil-doers—than tyrants. She calls on her father who had overcome the Athenians. She is sold in Ionia to a certain Dionysius, neither of Syracuse nor of Herakleia, who marries her. Chaireas, after catching Theron, who is impaled by decree of a Syracusan assembly, is himself sold in Ionia and is very nearly crucified. A satrap or two come in, as also Stateira, wife of the Great King, and the Great King himself, Artaxerxes, and we see them at home at Babylon. Chaireas takes service with the revolted Egyptians and does wonderful exploits, taking Tyre and Arvad, and restoring his captive wife to the Great King. In the end Chaireas is able to bring back his own lost wife to the delight of her father and of all Syracuse, and we have another picture of a Syracusan assembly, in which everything is settled happily." I do not think that anyone has ever clearly pointed out how plainly the love-story of Bandello, on which Shakespeare founded his exquisite tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*, and his Spanish contemporary, Lope de Vega, a comedy, is based on this novel. A Syracusan Romeo and Juliet! The more you think about Syracuse, the more it stands forth as the most interesting city of Greece. I looked Chariton out in Smith's *Classical and Mythological Dictionary*. Smith threw grave doubts on his having lived early enough to be the secretary of Athenagoras. Considering that the heroine of the novel is the sister-in-law of the tyrant Dionysius, under whose rule it must have been written if it were the work of Athenogoras' secretary, I share the view of Sir William Smith. Dionysius I. was not a safe man to trifle with. I have read the book in an old English translation, and it is quite interesting both as a love-romance and as a story of adventure, judged by the latest standards of fiction, though it purports to have been written four hundred years before Christ.

THE FIRST KING OF SICILY

THE MARVELLOUS STORY OF AGATHOCLES

This is not a history, so I need not give in detail the marvellous story of Agathocles, first king of Sicily, who began his life in Syracuse as a potter. He made his way by his extraordinary personal beauty, strength, courage, and cunning. He was the son of Carcinus, an exile from Rhegium, settled at Therma. Warned by an oracle that the child would do great mischief, Carcinus ordered him to be "exposed," but his mother saved him and persuaded her brother to bring him up. Afterwards his father forgave him, and the whole family were among the new citizens introduced into Syracuse by Timoleon. Damas, a leading Syracusan, detected the military talents of the young potter, and procured him promotion in the army, and when Damas died, his immensely wealthy widow married Agathocles. One wonders, knowing Agathocles, if Damas's death was hastened. Agathocles lived to be seventy-two, and when he died had been king of all Sicily for twenty-eight years. How he rose to power—the story of all his treacheries and massacres, and defeats and victories—need not be told here. One salient fact stands out in his life. While Carthage was in its heyday, with its power utterly unbroken, he sailed over to Africa, captured nearly all its possessions, and kept the Carthaginians pent up in their city for three years. More than once he was on the verge of capturing it. Ten years after his death his yet more famous son-in-law Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, conquered Sicily, and retained it for a couple of years. Agathocles himself was the son-in-law of Ptolemy of Egypt. On the departure of Pyrrhus, Hiero II., who had the sagacity to see that Rome would in the end triumph over Carthage, began his long and prosperous reign of forty-nine years, supported by the friendship of Rome, but his successor, Hieronymus, distracted from his loyalty to Rome by the splendid successes of Hannibal, joined the Carthaginians, which led to the downfall of Syracusan independence.

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ARCHIMEDES, THE PHILOSOPHER OF SYRACUSE

The brightest ornament of the long reign of Hiero was the great geometrician and engineer—Archimedes. The ancients called him a *philosophus*, by which they often meant a man of science or engineer, as well as a philosopher. His writings, which have come down to us, according to Mr. W. B. Donne,* prove him to have had an intellect of the very highest order. He possessed in a degree, never exceeded except perhaps by Newton, the inventive genius which discovers new provinces of inquiry. Two interesting but contrary contemporary opinions concerning the work of Archimedes have come down to us, for while the philosophers bemoaned that he should have debased so fine a genius by putting it to practical uses, Hiero asked him why he did not put his mathematical knowledge to some practical use. Archimedes had, it must be admitted, been talking in a way which invited a request for proof. He had told his friend Hiero, “that it was possible to move as great a weight as he would with as little strength as he listed to put to it, and boasting himself thus (as they reported of him) and trusting to the force of his reasons, wherewith he proved this conclusion, that if there were another globe of earth, he was able to remove this out of ours and pass it over to the other.” Hiero wanted to see a palpable proof, so Archimedes caught hold with a hook of one of the king’s largest carects, or hulks, and loading it as heavily as he could, and filling it as full of men as it would hold, turned a crank at the end of an engine with many pulleys and wheels, and made it move as easily as if it had been floating. This convinced Hiero, who set Archimedes to work at all sorts of military engines. None of these were ever used in his long and peaceful reign, but when the city was besieged by Marcellus, in the following reign, they made the resistance of the city one of the most famous in history. Archimedes was still alive, and conducted the defence without a man showing. The defence of Syracuse by Archimedes is worth quoting in the words of Plutarch in the famous old translation of Sir Thomas North, which was used by Shakespeare.†

* Smith’s *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology and Biography*. † Lately republished in the *Life of Marcellus*, in Dent’s *Temple Classics*, from which this extract is taken.

ARCHIMEDES AT THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE

ARCHIMEDES AT THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE

" Now, the Syracusans seeing themselves assaulted by the Romans, both by sea and land, were marvellously perplexed, and could not tell what to say, they were so afraid; imagining it was impossible for them to withstand so great an army. But when Archimedes fell to handle his engines, and to set them at liberty, there flew in the air infinite kinds of shot, and marvellous great stones, with an incredible noise and force on the sudden, upon the footmen that came to assault the city by land, bearing down, and tearing in pieces all those which came against them, or in what place soever they lighted, no earthly body being able to resist the violence of so heavy a weight; so that all their ranks were marvellously disordered. And as for the galleys that gave assault by sea, some were sunk with long pieces of timber like unto the yards of ships, whereto they fasten their sails, which were suddenly blown over the walls with force of their engines into their galleys, and so sunk them by their over great weight. Other being hoised up by the proes with hands of iron, and hooks made like cranes' bills, plunged their poops into the sea. Other being taken up with certain engines fastened within, one contrary to another, made them turn in the air like a whirligig, and so cast them upon the rocks by the town walls, and splitted them all to fitters, to the great spoil and murther of the persons that were within them. And sometimes the ships and galleys were lift clean out of the water, that it was a fearful thing to see them hang and turn in the air as they did; until that casting their men within them over the hatches, some here, some



Photo by Agnes
MARCELLUS, THE CONQUEROR OF SYRACUSE.
From his statue in the Capitol at Rome.

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there, by this terrible turning, they came in the end to be empty, and to break against the walls, or else to fall into the sea again, when their engines left their hold. Now for Marcellus' engine, which he brought against the walls, upon a bridge made of galleys joined together; that was called Sambuca, by reason of the fashion it had like to an instrument of musick of the same, which is a harp. The same being yet a good pretty way off from the walls, there fell a great stone upon it sent from the walls, weighing ten talents. Then, a second after that, and a third one after that, the which falling all into this engine with such a thunder and terrible tempest, brake the foundations of the engine, and tore all the bridge of the galleys joined together in pieces, that sustained it. So that Marcellus being amazed withal, not knowing well what it meant; was glad to retire quickly, and sent to make his trumpet sound the retrait to those that gave assault by land. Hereupon they sat in council to determine what was to be done, and they resolved that the next morning before day they should approach the walls if it were possible; because that Archimedes' engines, which were very strong and hard wound up, should by this means send all the force and fury of their stones and shot over their heads, and that near hand also he could do no good with them, for that they had not the scope of their level and carriage they should have. But Archimedes had prevented this device by long preparation before, having made provision of engines far and near, the level and carriage whereof was proportioned for all distances; their shot short, the arrows not very long, many holes and arches in the walls one hard by another, where there were store of crossbows to kill near hand, set in such places, as the enemies could not see them without. Wherefore, when the Romans thought to approach, thinking they had been safe and close, that no man saw them; it amazed them all when they were received again with infinite shot, and stricken to the ground with stones that fell upon their heads like lead; (for there was no part of all the walls whence they had not the like shot.) Whereupon they were forced again to retire from the walls. And yet when they were further off from them, the arrows, stones, and other kind of shot that flew in every place among them, killed a great number of them,

ARCHIMEDES AT THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE

scattered far from thence ; so that many of them were slain and sore wounded, and divers of their ships splitted, and they not once able to be revenged, nor to hurt their enemies, because Archimedes had placed his engines very closely behind the walls, and not upon the walls in sight of the enemy. So that it appeared the gods fought against the Romans, they were so slain and wounded, and yet they could not tell how, nor by whom. Notwithstanding, Marcellus escaped with life, safe from hurt, and mocking his work-maisters and enginers he had in his camp, he said unto them ; What, shall we not leave to make wars with this Briarian enginer and geometrician here ? who sitting still upon the wharf, in sporting manner hath with shame overthrown our navy, and exceeded all the fabulous hundred hands of the giants, discharging at one instant so many shots among us ? For indeed, all the residue of the Syracusans, were as the body and members of Archimedes' preparation ; and he himself was the only creature that moved and did all, all weapons else being quiet, and his engines only occupied, to assault and defend. At the length, Marcellus seeing his men thus afeard, as if they did but see the end of a rope, or any piece of timber upon the wall, they ran away, crying out, that Archimedes was letting loose some of his engines upon them ; he would no more approach the walls, nor give assault, determining to see if he could win it by long siege. Notwithstanding, Archimedes had such a great mind, and was so profoundly learned, having hidden in him the only treasure and secrets of geometrical inventions ; as he would never set forth any book how to make all these warlike engines, which wan him at that time the fame and glory, not of man's knowledge, but rather of divine wisdom. But he esteeming all kind of handicraft and invention to make engines, and generally all manner of sciences bringing common commodity by the use of them, to be but vile, beggarly and mercenary dross ; employed his wit and study only to write things, the beauty and subtlety whereof, were not mingled anything at all with necessity. For all that he hath written, are geometrical propositions, which are without comparison of any other writings whatsoever ; because the subject whereof they treat, doth appear by demonstration, the matter giving them the grace and

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the greatness, and the demonstration proving it so exquisitely, with wonderful reason and facility, as it is not repugnable. For in all geometry are not to be found more profound and difficult matters written, in more plain and simple terms, and by more easy principles, than those which he hath invented. Now some do impute this, to the sharpness of his wit and understanding, which was a natural gift in him ; others do refer it to the extreme pains he took, which made these things come so easily from him, that they seemed as if they had been no trouble to him at all. For no man living of himself can devise the demonstration of his propositions, what pain soever he take to seek it ; and yet straight so soon as he cometh to declare and open it, every man then imagineth with himself he could have found it out well enough, he can then so plainly make demonstration of the thing he meaneth to shew. And therefore that me thinks is like enough to be true, which they write of him ; that he was so ravished and drunk with the sweet enticements of this siren, which as it were lay continually with him, as he forgot his meat and drink, and was careless otherwise of himself, that oftentimes his servants got him against his will to the baths, to wash and anoint him ; and yet being there, he would ever be drawing out of the geometrical figures, even in the very imbers of the chimney. And while they were anointing of him with oils and sweet savours, with his finger he did draw lines upon his naked body ; so far was he taken from himself, and brought into an ecstasy or trance, with the delight he had in the study of geometry, and truly ravished with the love of the Muses. But amongst many notable things he devised, it appeareth, that he most esteemed the demonstration of the proportion between the cylinder (to it, the round column) and the sphere or globe contained in the same ; for he prayed his kinsmen and friends, that after his death they would put a cylinder upon his tomb, containing a massy sphere, with an inscription of the proportion, whereof the continent exceedeth the thing contained. So Archimedes being as you have heard, did as much as lay in him, both save himself and Syracuse from taking. . . . Syracuse being taken, nothing grieved Marcellus more, than the loss of Archimedes. Who being in his study when the city was taken, busily seeking out

THE DEATH OF ARCHIMEDES

by himself the demonstration of some geometrical proposition which he had drawn in figure, and so earnestly occupied therein, as he neither saw nor heard any noise of enemies that ran up and down the city, and much less knew it was taken; he wondered when he saw a soldier by him, that bad him go with him to Marcellus. Notwithstanding, he spake to the soldier, and bad him tarry until he had done his conclusion, and brought it to demonstration; but the soldier being angry with his answer, drew out his sword, and killed him. Other say, that the Roman soldier when he came, offered the sword's point to him, to kill him; and that Archimedes when he saw him, prayed him to hold his hand a little, that he might not leave the matter he looked for imperfect, without demonstration. But the soldier making no reckoning of his speculation, killed him presently. It is reported a third way also, saying, that certain soldiers met him in the streets going to Marcellus, carrying certain mathematical instruments in a little pretty coffer, as dials for the sun, spheres and angles, wherewith they measure the greatness of the body of the sun by view; and they supposing he had carried some gold or silver, or other precious jewels in that little coffer, slew him for it. But it is most true, that Marcellus was marvellous sorry for his death, and ever after hated the villain that slew him, as a cursed and execrable person; and how he made also marvellous much afterwards of Archimedes' kinsmen for his sake."

This last passage looks as if Archimedes were the inventor of some instrument like the sextant for taking observations by the sun.

SYRACUSE TAKEN BY THE ROMANS, WHO FLED FROM CANNÆ

The siege of Syracuse has three yet further interests for us; the first is that Syracuse was besieged and taken by the Romans disgraced at the defeat of Cannæ. When they fled, the Senate refused ever to employ them again, and when Marcellus applied for leave to employ them in Sicily the Senate sent him word "that the Commonwealth made no reckoning of the service of faint-hearted men like women; wherefore, if Marcellus thought good of their

IN SICILY

service, yet it should not be lawful for him to give them any crowns or rewards of honour, for any notable service soever they did, as generals are wont to give to honest men who serve valiantly." Marcellus persevered with this despised material, and in spite of all the ingenuity and artillery of Archimedes he eventually captured the city, after two years' siege, by scaling the walls at the gate known as the Hexapylon, near the Scala Greca, while the Syracusans were revelling over a festival to Diana. The second point is the wonderful clemency he showed to the Syracusans, both at the time of the capture of the city, and afterwards when the Syracusans intrigued against him before the Senate at Rome. The citizens were so grateful that they passed a law that "as oft as any of Marcellus' name or house came into Sicily the Syracusans should keep a solemn feast with garlands on their heads, and should also sacrifice to the gods."

THE ROMANS GOT THEIR FIRST IDEA OF GREEK ART FROM SYRACUSE

The third point is that such Romans who had never left Rome made their first acquaintance with Greek art by the pictures and statues and "goodliest tables," and other ornaments which Marcellus carried from Syracuse. "And this won the people's good-will much more to Marcellus, because he did so passingly set forth Rome with such excellent fine toys of Greece. But Fabius Maximus on the other side was better beloved by the old men, because he brought no such toys with him from the city of Tarentum when he won it. Indeed he brought away gold and other coin and much other goods that were profitable, but for images and tables he left them in their places, speaking a thing of great note. Let us leave the Tarentines their gods offended with them."

The great Marcellus was finally killed in a little skirmish by the still greater Hannibal at the hill of Petely.

One thing especially we note in Plutarch's thrilling account of the siege of Syracuse, that by the time of Hiero the Second the island of Ortygia, which had been the citadel of the tyrants, was no longer the most important part of Syracuse. In Marcellus's day

NO RUINS LEFT IN ACHRADINA

Ortygia had given way to Achradina, the part of the city which occupied the low, rocky plateau on the isthmus between the Great Harbour, the Little Harbour, and the tiny port of Trogilus on the open sea. To-day, though there are considerable remains of the city of Dionysius in the island of Ortygia which constitutes modern Syracuse, in Neapolis on the shore of the Great Harbour, and in distant Epipolæ, terminating at the Castle of Euryalus, there is, as far as I know, not one stone resting on its foundations in Achradina, though there are acres of foundations cut in the virgin rock. No one visits the stony wilderness of Achradina nowadays for anything but its glorious view of Etna.

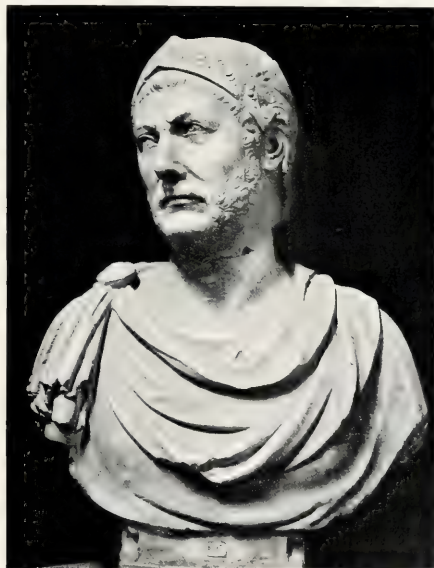


Photo by Amann.

HANNIBAL

From the statue in the National Museum at Naples.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WITH CICERO AT SYRACUSE

THE Villa Politi at Syracuse was the only hotel in Sicily where we ever had dinner at what Londoners would call a reasonable hour, though when they got to Sicily most of them seemed to consider it an unreasonable hour. We dined at half-past seven or a quarter to eight; in theory we dined at seven. The train or the Malta steamer, or the things we were going to eat, were always late. In consequence that half-hour became a recognised time for study or for general conversation in the little *salon de lecture* off the dining-room.

DIONYSIUS AND THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES

One night when I came in after changing for dinner, Stephana, who had *The Student's Greece* opened at a well-marked passage, asked me, "Which Dionysius was it that played that trick on Damocles?" She read out the account of the flatterer lying on a golden couch decked with the most gorgeous trappings, garlanded, and anointed, supping the richest food from golden plate, waited on by beautiful pages, surrounded by lovely women, and the grim despot suddenly drawing his attention to the naked sword suspended over his head by a single hair. "At this sight," says Smith, paraphrasing Cicero, "his satisfaction vanished in an instant, and he entreated to be released from the enjoyment of pleasures which could only be tasted at the risk of life."

"I'll bet he jumped over the table," said Witheridge.

"If you want to picture the whole scene," said I, "you had better read Plutarch's life of Dion; there you will see in what splendid state

CICERO'S DESCRIPTION OF SYRACUSE

not only the tyrant himself, but wealthy private citizens, like Dion, lived. I can lend you the Plutarch, but I want to say one thing, that you ought not to get your Damocles from Smith, but from Cicero himself. It comes from the *Tusculan Disputations*."

"I can't read Latin."

"That doesn't matter. I sent the nine volumes of Bohn's crib to Cicero addressed to myself here by parcels post with the little Plutarchs. It only cost half a crown, and the very best way to understand the Sicily of classical days, which is Sicily outside of Palermo, is to suck your Cicero and Plutarch."

WHY CICERO WROTE SO MUCH ABOUT SICILY

"Why did Cicero know so much about Sicily?"

"He was one of the two Roman quæstors of Sicily for B.C. 75, and he spent two months in Sicily a few years later in collecting the witnesses and the evidence for the impeachment of Verres, which tells us more about ancient Sicily than any other source of information."

"What sort of things, for instance?"

For reply I went to my room and brought the translation of the *Verres*, opened at Cicero's description of Syracuse.

Stephana read it out in her pleasant, serious voice; she had the same absence of *mauvaise honte* as other Bostonians, and a natural gift of elocution, which had fortunately escaped cultivation. It is a craze in America to teach girls tricks like poodles, and one of the tricks is elocution.

CICERO'S DESCRIPTION OF SYRACUSE

"You have often heard that the city of Syracuse is the greatest of the Greek cities and the most beautiful of all. It is so, O judges, as it is said to be; for it is so by its situation, which is strongly fortified, and which is on every side by which you can approach it, whether by sea or land, very beautiful to behold. And it has harbours almost enclosed within the walls and in sight of the whole city; harbours which have different entrances, but which meet together and are connected at the other end. By their union a part of the town, which

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is called the island, being separated from the rest by a narrow arm of the sea, is again joined to and connected with the other by a bridge. That city is so great that it may be said to consist of four cities of the largest size; one of which, as I have said, is that "Island" which, surrounded by two harbours, projects out towards the mouth and entrance of each. In it there is a palace which did belong to King Hiero, which our prætors are in the habit of using; in it are many sacred buildings, but two, which have a great pre-eminence over all the others,—one a temple of Diana, and the other one, which before the arrival of that man was the most ornamented of all, sacred to Minerva. At the end of this island is a fountain of sweet water, the name of which is Arethusa, of incredible size, very full of fish, which would be entirely overwhelmed by the waves of the sea, if it were not protected from the sea by a rampart and dam of stone. There is also another city at Syracuse, the name of which is Achradina, in which there is a very large forum, most beautiful porticoes, a highly decorated town-hall; a most spacious senate-house, and a superb temple of Jupiter Olympius; and the other districts of the city are joined together by one broad, unbroken street and divided by many cross-streets and by private houses. There is a third city, which, because in that district there is an ancient temple of Fortune, is called Tyche, in which there is a spacious gymnasium and many sacred buildings, and that district is the most frequented and the most populous. There is also a fourth city, which, because it is the last built, is called Neapolis, in the highest part of which there is a very large theatre, and, besides that, there are two temples of great beauty—one of Ceres, the other of Libera—and a statue of Apollo, which is called Temenites, very beautiful and of colossal size, which, if he could have moved them, he would not have hesitated to carry off.

"Let me see," she said when she had finished the paragraph, "the harbours are the same?"

"They would be," put in Witheridge; "it takes a lot to shift a bay."

"Please don't interrupt, Ralph. The Palace of Hiero; you said that no one knew where that was?"

ACHRADINA IN CICERO'S DAY

"It is pretty sure to have been where the Jesuit church, the Collegio, stands, because that is the best site in the island. They would probably find its foundations if they had to do any digging there."

"The Temple of Diana—that's the temple in the pit; the Temple of Minerva—that's the cathedral; the Fountain of Arethusa—that's there; the Forum of Achradina—that's where the column sticks up out of the washing green——"

"Where the little girl was sitting with nothing——" began Witheridge.

"Stop, Ralph!"

"With nothing but the sun to keep her warm, while her mother was washing her clothes in the ditch and drying them on the prickly-pear tree."

Witheridge, who was rather nettled, went on in a contemptuous voice, "Where are your highly decorated town-hall, your spacious senate house, and all the rest of them—all those streets?"

Stephana was quite equal to the occasion. "We have the foundations of them; there are foundations enough for anything in Achradina."

"There are foundations enough for anything in Achradina. For a space of a mile or two long and broad you are never out of sight of quadrangles levelled in the rock by the mason's chisel," I said, supporting her.

"Are there any remains of that Temple of Fortune in Tyche?" asked Stepšana.



Photo by E. B. Co. from

"WHILE HER MOTHER WAS WASHING HER CLOTHES"

IN SICILY

THE PALESTRA (GINNASIO) OF SYRACUSE

"Not that I know of; but the gymnasium is there which contained the tomb of Timoleon—that Palæstra which Verres found so handy, and which comes into that Greek novel about the Loves of Chæreas and Callirrhoe."

"Is there all about the Palæstra in that *Verres* you brought down?"

"Only about Verres' view of the Palæstra."

"Well, what was Verres' view of the Palæstra?"

"An intensely practical one. He took advantage of the extravagant importance which the Greeks attached to it. The Greek gentleman with money was not like the American. He did not go into business; he gave his entire time to athletic sports at the Palæstra and his vices. The Palæstra was, of course, good in its way, for it made him pay some regard to his health instead of relapsing into an Oriental. Well, the Palæstra occupied such a place in the public estimation that when a rich Greek with a taste for posthumous advertisement died, instead of endowing a hospital or a Baptist mission to convert the people of Egypt, he left a bequest for making the Palæstra a still more delightful public club. Verres got the wind that a Syracusan named Heraclius had received a legacy of three million sesterces and a quantity of exquisite chased silver and embroidered robes and desirable slaves, with the sole condition that certain statues should be erected in the Palæstra. He suborned men to swear that the statues were not erected in accordance with the will and to demand that the whole legacy should be forfeited. Had the charge been true, it would have been in accordance with Greek sentiment that this highly esteemed Palæstra should have received the whole legacy in lieu of a legatee so base as to try to defraud such an institution. But Verres cherished no such illusion. The property was to be forfeited to himself. He used the palæstræ in this way all over Sicily."

"What a villain! Well, the theatre in Neapolis—that's there right enough; the temples of Ceres and Libera?"

"They say those foundations down by the cemetery belong to these two temples, but I am quite sure that they are part of the fortifications of Dionysius. They aren't the shape of a temple at all."

THE TEMPLE OF MINERVA (CATHEDRAL)

"And the colossal statue of Apollo?"

"Well, that settles the question whether it was the Apollo Belvedere which was carried away from the Nymphæum above the theatre; for that certainly was not too colossal for Verres to steal."



Photo by Crupi.

TOMBS AND THE NYMPHÆUM

"That finishes the things mentioned in the paragraph."

"But it does not finish what we are asked to believe of ancient Syracuse, for Cicero mentions only four cities, or quarters. He does not count Epipolæ. Nor, apparently, did Marcellus, who marched right past it and directed his attack on Tyche. I sometimes wonder if there ever was a quarter of Epipolæ, or if it was only a detached fortress."

THE SPLENDOUR OF THE CATHEDRAL OF SYRACUSE WHEN IT WAS THE TEMPLE OF MINERVA

"But that isn't all either in another sense, for there's a lot about the Temple of Minerva, lower down, and it is very interesting, because this temple is one of the most perfect in existence, though it is so

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overlaid by the cathedral buildings that comparatively little of it is visible. There is one thing, however, of which no one, judging it by its present appearance, would have suspected it, and that is the extraordinary beauty and richness which characterised it before the depredations of Verres. Cicero speaks of it as if it had been the finest building in Sicily. Its inside walls were covered with an exquisitely painted series of pictures representing a cavalry battle of the Syracusan King Agathocles. 'Nothing,' he says, 'could be more noble than those paintings; there was nothing at Syracuse that was thought more worthy going to see.' Verres 'took away all those pictures, and left naked and unsightly those walls whose decorations had remained inviolate for so many ages and had escaped so many wars.' Those walls are standing still—still naked, but only unsightly when they are hung with church decorations or carved out into piers. Besides the Agathocles series, Verres 'took away out of the same temple twenty-seven more pictures, beautifully painted, among which were likenesses of the kings and tyrants of Sicily, which delighted one not only by the skill of the painter, but also by reminding us of the men and by enabling us to recognise their persons.'"

One wonders if any of them were by Zeuxis. Every good Sicilian is convinced that he was born at the Sicilian Heraclea, and he is known to have painted the famous Alcmena at Girgenti. One wishes, too, that some picture of Zeuxis had survived to show if he attained a higher degree of drawing than we get on the best Greek vases, where the figures are often extremely beautiful, but never perfectly natural. The best hopes we have of Zeuxis come from the Greek terra-cotta figurines, which are wonderfully graceful and realistic, though we know that they were made with moulds.

The masterpieces of the temple, however, seem to have been the chryselephantine doors, the folding-doors of gold and ivory, of which Cicero wrote:—

"I am able to prove this distinctly, O judges, that no more magnificent doors, none more beautifully wrought of gold and ivory, ever existed in any temple. It is incredible how many Greeks have left written accounts of the beauty of these doors; they, perhaps,

DIONYSIUS'S WIT

may admire and extol them too much. . . . On the folding-doors were some subjects most minutely executed in ivory ; all these he caused to be taken out ; he tore off and took away a very fine head of the Gorgon, with snakes for hair ; and he showed, too, that he was influenced not only by admiration for the workmanship, but by a desire of money and gain ; for he did not hesitate to take away also all the golden knobs from these folding-doors, which were numerous and heavy ; and it was not the workmanship of these, but the weight which pleased him. And so he left the folding-doors in such state, that, though they had formerly contributed greatly to the ornament of the temple, they now seemed to have been made only for the purpose of shutting it up."

Cicero says that after the prætorship of Verres, the cicerones, whom he calls the *Mystagogi*, spent their time in telling people what had been taken away. Verres, it is true, had a Syracusan predecessor in the art of commandeering, but then, he had not the pretty wit of Dionysius, who was never tired of pointing out that "Heaven helps those who help themselves."

DIONYSIUS'S WIT

Having fair wind for the voyage back to Syracuse from Locris, where he had pillaged the Temple of Proserpine. Dionysius said, with a smile, "See, my friends, what favouring winds the immortal gods bestow upon church-robbers !"

At the Temple of Jupiter Olympius, in the Peloponnesus, he disrobed a statue of the god of a golden mantle of great weight, which Gelo had given it, saying that a golden mantle was too heavy in summer and too cold in winter, and that the woollen cloak which he threw over the statue in its place would serve for all seasons. At another temple he took away the little golden emblems of victory, the cups and the coronets which were in the stretched-out hands of the statues, saying he did 'not take, but receive them ; for it would be folly not to accept good things from the gods, to whom we were constantly praying for favours, when they stretch out their hands towards us.' He had all those articles sold by the common crier,

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and, after he had received the money for them, with a further grim touch of humour, ordered the purchasers to restore the gods their property. Cicero, whose works are the great storehouse to which one turns for knowledge of the life of ancient Syracuse, of which he was very fond, tells us all these anecdotes of Dionysius in his treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*.

DIONYSIUS'S DREAD OF ASSASSINATION

It was Dionysius I. who played the practical joke on Damocles, related above, of letting a sword down from the ceiling suspended by a single horse-hair over his head. Cicero tells the story in his *Tusculan Disputations*, and the instances he gives of Dionysius's dread of assassination almost justified the trick. He would not trust his person to anyone except other persons' slaves whom he had set free, and strangers and barbarians.

"He would not trust his throat to a barber, but had his daughters taught to shave; so that these royal virgins were forced to descend to the base and slavish employment of shaving the head and beard of their father. Nor would he trust even them, when they were grown up, with a razor, but contrived how they might burn off the hair of his head and beard with red-hot nutshells.

"And as to his two wives—Aristomache, his countrywoman, and Doris of Locris—he never visited them at night before everything had been well searched and examined. And as he had surrounded the place where his bed was with a broad ditch, and made a way over it with a wooden bridge, he drew that bridge over after shutting his bedchamber door. And as he did not dare to stand on the ordinary pulpits from which they usually harangued the people, he generally addressed them from a high tower. And it is said that when he was disposed to play at ball—for he delighted much in it—and had pulled off his clothes, he used to give his sword into the keeping of a young man whom he was very fond of. On this, one of his intimates said pleasantly, 'You certainly trust your life with him'; and as the young man happened to smile at this, he ordered them both to be

CICERO'S PROGRESS THROUGH SICILY

slain, the one for showing how he might be taken off, the other for approving of what had been said by smiling.

"Yet how desirous he was of friendship, though at the same time he dreaded the treachery of friends, appears from the story of those two Pythagoreans. One of these had been security for his friend, who was condemned to die; the other, to release his security, presented himself at the time appointed for his dying. 'I wish,' said Dionysius, 'you would admit me as the third in your friendship.'"

THE GREEKS LIKE THE JAPANESE

To return to the subject of the depredations of Verres, Cicero is intensely modern in the way in which he writes of the Greeks. He speaks of them in the same half-affectionate, half-patronising way that we speak of the Japanese. "This sort of ornament, these works and specimens of art, these statues and paintings, delight men of Greek extraction to an excessive degree; therefore by their complaints we can understand that these things appear most bitter to those men which perhaps may seem trifling and contemptible to us." The crowning grievance of all, it appears, was that the Greeks were so insulted at Verres's pretended purchases of their treasures. No Greek individual or community sold the sacred treasures inherited from ancestors except from the direst necessity, and to be thought to have sold a long-inherited treasure like the Cupid of Praxatiles, which Verres pretended to have purchased from Caius Heius, the richest man of Messina, for 1,600 sesterces about £16—was an unimaginable insult. They would far rather have had them stolen outright.

CICERO'S PROGRESS THROUGH SICILY TO COLLECT EVIDENCE AGAINST VERRES

Cicero's two months' scouring through Sicily for evidence against Verres was like a triumphal progress. Everyone remembered the days when he was Quæstor at Lilybæum how unlike he had been to the ordinary Roman magistrate; the liberality he had shown towards the farmers of the revenue; his courtesy towards private

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traders; his strict integrity; his rigid impartiality; his disinterested self-denial in all branches of administration. His inordinate vanity had excited no comment in Sicily, which was only too accustomed to Roman swaggering.

WHAT THE SYRACUSANS THOUGHT OF VERRES

Almost the only city in the island, except Messina, whose authorities had been the accomplices of Verres in his robberies, which did not send deputies to Rome to protest against Verres was Syracuse. Cicero imagined that the Syracusan authorities also were accomplices. They had put up a gilt statue of Verres in the Senate House, and Syracuse had been the usual residence "of the high-born and beautiful women at whose will he had directed all the measures of his Prætorship for three years, and of the men to whom they were married." But the Priest of Jupiter, who occupied much the same position at Syracuse as Pontifex Maximus at Rome, came and asked him to attend a meeting of the Syracusan Senate, which brought to light much grim sarcasm. The gilt statue, it appeared, they had put up not as a monument of his services, but as a monument of his glaring wickednesses, and they produced "from the most sacred part of the treasury" public documents, in which everything he had taken away was entered. "What had been taken out of the Temple of Minerva? This and that. What was missing out of the Temple of Jupiter? What was missing out of the Temple of Bacchus?"

Verres, it appears, had overreached himself even in the matter of his favourite palæstræ, because he had taken away a statue of Aristæus, probably quite ignorant of the fact that this god enjoyed an exaggerated importance among the frequenters of the gymnasia as the inventor of oil.

But the crowning piece of sarcasm was the vote of panegyric which they passed in such a form that all men might see that it was not a panegyric, but a satire. It ran: "Because he had scourged none," though it was notorious that he had beaten and executed the noblest and most innocent men of the province; "because he had administered the affairs of the province with vigilance"—an allusion

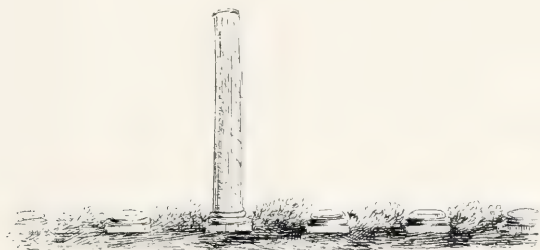
CICERO AGAINST VERRES

to the all-night vigils spent in debauchery and amours; "because Verres had kept all pirates at a distance from Sicily," when, as a matter of fact, the pirates had annihilated his fleets and sailed about in the harbour of Syracuse.

Verres had laid his plans uncommonly well. He had used his wealth to command the influence of the great family of the Metelli, by securing their election—one to the Consulship, one to the Prætorship of Sicily, and one to another Prætorship. The Sicilian Metellus was staunch to his political friend. He attempted to prevent Cicero taking copies of the necessary documents, but Cicero, the ablest lawyer of the day, furnished with plenary powers, withered up this opposition like paper thrown on a fire, and the utmost that Metellus could achieve was to declare that his conduct in speaking Greek—the French of that day—to the Senate of Syracuse was beneath the dignity of a Roman magistrate.

"Did Cicero do all his writing on Sicily about Syracuse?"

"No, he has something to say about most of the cities you go to in Sicily, but the only other of which he has anything to say which would interest you much is Enna."



P R I T A N E O

ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE FORUM (AGORA) OF SYRACUSE.

From "Antique Monuments Siciliens," by Viollet-le-Duc, 1856.

CHAPTER XIX.

A PICNIC TO THE PAPYRUS OF THE RIVER ANAPO AND THE CORAL CAVES OF ACHRADINA

IT was only really March when, in 1898, we made our second excursion up the Anapo, but the day had all the beauty of the Southern summer. It was so hot that everything in nature except our superb boatman just basked along; the sky was as blue as a sky full of sunshine can be, the air was as soft to the touch as fur, the roads were white and glistening, and the sea too basked and patted the shore.

In Sicily, like Japan, labour is cheap, and you need not be a millionaire to have to do nothing for yourself. The lunch which Madame Politi put up, with affectionate consideration for each of our individual tastes, found its way to the boat somehow, so all we had to do was to stroll down half a mile or so with a railway cutting all glorious with long tresses of *barba di Giove*, the fleshy crimson-flowered pig's-face, on our right hand, and the low picturesque rocks and blue African sea where Syracusan beauties bathed, when Dionysius was tyrant, on our left, to the moat which connects the smaller and greater harbours of antiquity.

OUR BARCA

Here we found a fine new barca waiting us, brilliantly streaked with red and blue, and with large eyes painted on its bow like a Shanghai sampan, so that the boat should see its way. Its bow-post stood up a foot or more above the gunwale, and was adorned with

SICILIAN BOATMEN

a bright tuft, which doubtless had a lucky meaning, and from it projected at the height of the gunwale a sharp cockspur several inches long, which likewise doubtless had some historical or superstitious explanation. Two bronzed fellows, giants for Italians, and with the old Greek features, were awaiting us on the beach—and it must be confessed that a Mediterranean beach is extremely like a dustheap. We were rather disconcerted by seeing our lunch in the outside barca of all, right out in the bay as it were, but the boatman sprang from barca to barca like a goat and drew it in. And then we embarked, and in a few minutes they were sending us flying across the bay, with characteristic strength and elegance. The bay was as calm as it generally is at Syracuse in the morning. The breeze comes up in the afternoon. Syracuse lay sleeping behind us without one puff of smoke rising from the flat roofs into the summery atmosphere, and in front Etna and the Hyblæan hills were vague in the shivering haze which produces mirages. Stephana, a new Englander, unaccustomed to Southern effects, was enchanted; Witheridge, too, was quite happy, because we were in a boat. Mere antiquarianising did not appeal to him much, but being in a boat pleased him, however little there was to do, as did going into a cave, or climbing a tower. He liked what he called natural pleasures, though he could not share Stephana's enthusiasm when we found a smaller kind of asphodel with a new leaf like the little round rushes you find in Richmond Park.

The first thing a Sicilian boatman does when he goes for a row is to take off his hat and his boots and his stockings. He has them to keep up a proper appearance on shore, where he spends his time in playing chucky-stones, which is the Scotch for knuckle-bones, or the oldest game in the world—Mora.* Stephana regarded it in the light of a personal favour. They looked so much more Byronic when they were bare-legged and bare-headed. She smiled her admiration frankly, and they smiled back still prettier smiles of shy pleasure.

* The favourite gambling game of the lower-class Italian. Each player throws out as many fingers as he chooses of one hand, and shouts out a guess at the combined total simultaneously. If either guesses right he scores one.

IN SICILY

WASHING-DAY IN SICILY

As we darted across the bay all the shipping we passed seemed to be doing their washing; perhaps in Sicily it is washing-day every day at sea as it is ashore. The real fact is, I suppose, that the poor Sicilians only have about two copies of each kind of garment, and that washing, when it is done without soap, is inexpensive. The first thing we saw when we got to the mouth of the Anapo was more

washing. The women were standing in its clear, shallow water laundrying. One element of picturesqueness had disappeared since we were there in 1896, and Witheridge was dreadfully disappointed by it, not because it was not picturesque, but for the lark he had expected to have. We had told him how we had ridden astride of the boatman's left shoulder when we were there in 1896; but I think that Stephana, though she had every reason to be proud of her feet, was a good deal



Photo by the Author.

WOMEN LAUNDRYING AT THE MOUTH OF THE ANAPO

relieved when she found that the boat, by careful manœuvring, could now pass the bar at the mouth of the river; for it is not very easy for a girl to ride astride of a boatman's shoulder. The washerwomen showered pleasantries on us as we passed, but as we did not understand Sicilian, their wit, which was very likely broad, was lost on us.

NOT THE ANAPO

IT IS NOT THE ANAPO AT ALL

To speak with scrupulous correctness, the excursion to the Anapo does not, I believe, take you to any part of that river familiar to the ancients, for the main stream is so hopelessly shoaly that you use an artificially-cut branch, or, not to put too fine a point upon it, a canal, till you reach its tributary, the Cyane, which contains much more water than the Anapo itself. The navigation is better than it was in 1896, but even now you have to transboat, as Witheridge expressed it, at a kind of culvert which is dignified by the name of bridge.

THE PAPYRUS

Comparatively soon after that Stephana gave a little cry of delight as we came to the first clump of the papyrus of old Egypt, which is said to grow wild nowhere but here now. It was not what you would call a showy clump, for the hair of its leaves was dead and red, and the clump would have looked like so many dry stooks if it had not been for the convolvulus trailing over it; but presently we came to a good clump standing up like a tall yucca against the sky, twelve or fifteen feet high perhaps. The water was perfectly clear, and was about ten feet wide and ten feet deep, but you could not see any fish against the glittering sand of its bottom. At first only one side had papyrus, and the other was a splendid mass of brambles and other creepers. But soon there was papyrus on both sides, almost over-arching the narrow stream, and making progress extremely difficult. We swished against the papyrus stalks, first one side and then the other, and Stephana was wild with Witheridge for pulling out his pocket-knife and slashing them like a schoolboy as we passed; she, of course, being intensely artistic, wished to sit as still as a mouse taking in the magic of sunshine and blue sky seen through the over-arching green, or listening to the shrill notes of



PAPYRUS-ROOTS

Showing the truncheons at the foot of the stems, the portion of the plant from which the paper of the Ancients was manufactured. *From "Lettres sur l'Égypte," 1792*

IN SICILY

the warblers or watching the big hawks that sailed overhead, and the huge black dragon-flies which darted round the boat. She wanted to soak the whole thing in quietly, and Witheridge, big schoolboy that he was, wanted to slash and sing, but he had the good taste to stop his singing when the sailors began singing their own catches to relieve the hardness of the pull, and he soon had a fine variation to his slashing in an incident which I introduced into *The Admiral*.

CATCHING A CHAMELEON

We had been watching some time for the queer little green leaf frogs which sit on the papyrus, when suddenly Stephana saw a lovely green lizard, quite unlike the ordinary saurian which basks and darts on every sunny wall, and nearly a foot long. The boatman said it was a chameleon, and her pleasure was doubled, though I do not think there are any real chameleons in Sicily.

"Oh, do catch it, Ralph!" she cried, but just as he was going to make his grab the boatman purposely startled it. A little further on we saw another, and I saw an ugly look come into Witheridge's face, and I knew that there was going to be a row if the boatman tried to scare this one. From my knowledge of Sicilians I was quite sure that he would, for if he had not had some special reason in the first instance he would have done all he could to help catch it. Fortunately the men could talk a good deal of Italian, and Stephana's Italian was equal to the occasion. She discovered that they have some tremendous superstition on the subject, and begged Ralph not to so coaxingly that I wondered he did not kiss her there and then before us all. I concluded that they were on the ordinary terms of engaged couples, though they were very unengaged in outward appearances generally. Ralph Witheridge gave you the idea of a man who wanted to be engaged rather than a man who was, though I am sure Stephana was really devoted to him.

WHAT THE PAPYRUS IS LIKE

The question of the chameleon being settled, we swished gaily up stream between papyrus and flowering donax, eleven feet high.

THE PAPYRUS AVENUE

and tall Thames reeds and yellow irises and common rushes, all woven together, while the deep, clear water was now full of waving water plants. The papyrus itself was a fine mixture of green and red and yellow; both the old leaves and the gummy, spear-shaped buds out of which the leaves unfolded were of a deep red. The old stalks were yellow, and the young stalks and the young tufts of hair-like leaves, which grow a foot long, were of a lightish green. When the leaves are very young, not long unfolded, they look like brooms. A large clump of papyrus has a strange and noble effect; its tufted canes, for one or more tufts grow only at the top of the cane, that may be ten or even twenty feet long, spread out with the fan-like grace of a palmetto. The tufts, which are like grass tussocks, are of considerable size; if their hair-like leaves were stiff instead of drooping they would often be two or three feet across, whereas now a full-grown one is about the size of a man's head, and the general effect of a large close clump of them is something like the towzled head of a cyclops, if those volcanic giants of Etna's sea coast were green-haired like the sea deities in Milton's *Comus*. The shrill notes of the warblers, and the clear notes of the little brown kingfishers which darted across like aerial torpedoes, mingled pleasantly with the "brek-ke-kek-kex-koax-koax" of the frogs, who have not altered their song since the time of Aristophanes, and the crackling of the old papyrus stalks.



PAPYRUS PLUME AND BUD
From "*Letras ao La Sile*," 1782

IN THE PAPYRUS AVENUE

I really did think that Witheridge was impressed at last; he had a sort of soulful look in his eyes, but presently he said, "We ought to have come here in a birch bark, Steph," and Stephana answered, "Oh, a birch bark's all right, but you wouldn't like to upset me in your favourite white frock!" to which I am ashamed to say he replied by pinching her, and making her give one of her charming blushes.

IN SICILY

Occasionally there would be a break in the long avenue of papyrus and a reed hut of the antique pattern tied to the other reeds to prevent its being blown or washed away. And these open patches were the best for the big bunches of yellow iris, which Stephana was



THE PAPYRUS ON THE RIVER ANAPO

Photo by Semmer.

collecting for a splendid Syracusan jar, which made everything in a mess because it was so porous. Once a wine gourd came floating down the stream. The frogs never stopped talking Greek. And at last we came to the Fountain of Cyane, which, when we were here before, had been full of officers and sailors from the great Italian men-of-war in the harbour, as Witheridge said, playing the giddy-ox just as if they had been Americans or English.

THE FOUNTAIN OF CYANE

AT THE FOUNTAIN OF CYANE

Stephana was enchanted with Cyane. To begin with, it is one of the most romantic spots in all the lands of ancient Greece, for it was here that the goddess of spring, Proserpine, first wooed by Pluto as she stooped to pick a hundred-headed narcissus in the fields of Enna, was carried down to the Under-world. The friend of her girlhood, the nymph Cyane, died of grief, and her unquenchable tears were turned into the ever-flowing spring which fills the cleft through which Proserpine sank. Gods and men were appalled at the thought that the spring-goddess was never again to fill her own Sicily first, and the rest of the world by degrees, with flowers and young green leaves, and in the end Pluto had to agree that she should wander for eight months above the surface of the earth and only reign the seeding-time below. Hercules, the demi-god ox-herd, coming along taught the Sicilians the proper offering to make to the queen of the Under-world. A black bull was slaughtered and sunk in the depths of the Fountain of Cyane by which she left the earth.

Apart from the glamour of the classics, Cyane has enough on a day like this to fix itself for ever on your memory. All of a sudden the river, which has only just been wide enough for a boat to be punted up it, opens out into a broad pool partly surrounded with papyrus, partly with open meadows, gay with scarlet and bright blue pimpurnels, six inches high, and the great Sicilian daisy, and marvellously vivid poppies and marigolds—some almost scarlet, some with their hearts almost black—mingled with reeds. The Egyptian papyrus, with its picturesque spear-shaped buds, is tangled with preposterously fine British brambles, with blackberries three parts ripe in March. The *frou-frou* we had made as we pushed through the papyrus sent up flocks of large birds.

The sky above was now as clear and blue as a sapphire, and Etna and the hills of Hybla seemed so near and clear that you almost expected their reflection in the marvellously clear pool, thirty feet deep, which went down to a sort of crater like Etna itself,

IN SICILY

and possessed a most curious property—for it made all the stones in its bottom, and the huge grey mullet which were swimming about in its depths between the waving garden of weeds, as blue as the copper ore from which it takes its name. One could not make out



Fente Ciane

THE FOUNTAIN OF CYANE

Which burst forth where Pluto cleft the earth to carry off Proserpine to the under world

From "Antichi Monumenti Siracusani," by Vincenzio Politti, 1856

what these sea fish were doing there, in a spring of absolutely fresh and very cold water two or three miles from the sea, but they were of huge size and seemed very well, and, though they kept at a good safe depth when they had nothing particular to do, rose freely if you threw them bread.

A SICILIAN LUNCH

Here, floating idly in a quaint Sicilian barca on the waters of the famous spring, we spent, I daresay, an hour eating our fowl and cheese and figs and oranges and prickly pears, washed down with draughts of the full-bodied Sicilian wine, which Stephana poured into a tumbler half-filled with water by the simple expedient of dipping it over the side of the boat. She did not think there could be microbes enough to taint all the waters of Cyane. When we had done eating figs—

WHERE THE ATHENIANS SURRENDERED

and you can eat a good many of these little, roughly-dried, native figs, which you buy strung on sticks of rushes—we dropped down stream again, feeling as if we had eaten of the lotus itself, it was such a soft, warm afternoon.

THE PLACE WHERE THE ATHENIANS SURRENDERED

When we got back to the bridge we left the boatman to change our lunch and other traps to the sea-going boat, while we made an expedition to the two tall columns and the deep hole which constitute the temple of the Olympian Jove to-day, the spot which of all others wakes the proudest memories in the Syracusan breast, for it was here that the first of the Athenian armies laid down its arms, exhausted by starvation and the slings and javelins which formed the rifle-fire of the ancients, an arm in which they were themselves deficient. The surrender took place, I imagine, just beyond the temple itself, where there is a kind of shallow latomia, now a meadow carpeted with white flowers and studded with a few olives and fruit trees. Its low cliffs, one of which was crowned with the temple, were singularly adapted for the slinging and javelin throwing of the Syracusan peltasts, while the Athenian hoplites were jammed in the gorge below like tunnies in a net. There was no choice between surrender and death; they could not get at their enemy. To-day the site of the temple is a blazing field of Canterbury bells and pink convolvulus, through which a stylobate protrudes topped by two fine columns. The flowers in the gully below, where an army surrendered and Athens began her fall, are chiefly marguerites, but its sides bear the great yellow spurge, and the fields above are full of the smaller rush-leaved asphodel and crimson poppies and the light green wild mignonette, with, of course, the ubiquitous marigold—here very small. The hole below the columns, some ten feet square by twenty feet deep, is said to be the treasury of the temple; half-way down it, from one wall, springs the beautifier and dignifier of Sicilian ruins, a wild fig tree.

IN SICILY

VISITORS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO PLUCK THE PAPYRUS

Stephana had no eye for the beauty of the surroundings ; like a true woman, she was so sorry for the Athenians. She was silent and pensive and most interesting-looking as we picked our way along the vile cart-trail which leads from the temple to the river, but which did not seem to disconcert in the least a couple of the bumpy two-wheeled Sicilian carts full of soulful-eyed women with their heads hooded in brilliant handkerchiefs, any one of whom could have sat for a Madonna by Murillo. There were about a dozen and a half of them in the two carts. Stephana, when the boatman assured her that the stones in the bottom of the spring would lose their *lapis lazuli* effect as soon as they were brought to the surface, contented herself with bringing four papyrus reeds as specimens of the four stages of the plant's head, first a knob and then a spear, and then a wisp and then a plume. But unfortunately she was carrying them all herself, and there was a rule, framed by the civic fathers of Syracuse to prevent the eradication of the papyrus, to the effect that no one is to gather more than one. In vain we protested that we had gathered one each, and that Stephana was only carrying them for us all. The *octroi* man entrusted with the guardianship of this paradise of weeds was not to be convinced until Witheridge tried him with about twopence-halfpenny. A Sicilian *custode* observes the law in its letter or its spirit as suits his pocket.

It was quite a comfort to be back again where both men could use the oars, for while we were in the narrow papyrus avenues we had been pulling one oar nearly all the time.

THE CAVES OF SYRACUSE

It was afternoon when we got back into the harbour, and as usual the wind had sprung up a little, sufficient for us to hoist our jib and queer sprited staysail. Heeling over merrily we were back at Syracuse in about twenty minutes, feasting our eyes as we flew on the white town rising out of the dark green avenue on the Marina, and crowned by its three towering buildings.

THE CAVES OF SYRACUSE

As we were back so soon, and had taken the boatman by the day, Stephana suggested that we should try the cave-trip which he had been painting in such glowing colours.

The Sicilian boatman is very like the Sicilian cabman and the Neapolitan cabman. If you engage him for the smallest job, within a quarter of an hour, he will be suggesting a job that takes the whole day, therefore no sooner were we embarked for the Anapo than our good boatman began to tell us



Photo by Crupi.

THE GREAT HARBOUR AT THE MOUTH OF THE ANAPO

of the wonderful caves there were in the coast between Syracuse and Augusta. They were superior, he informed us, to anything at Capri. He was certainly less enthusiastic about them when he found that we were going to do them on the same day as the Anapo, but there was nothing to do but to go, as we had hired him for the day, and it was still fairly early in the afternoon, and as we were sailing and he felt sure of getting an extra *buon' amano*, he showed his white teeth pleasantly. The Syracusans, as I have said, are a more cheerful race than the Palermitans. Of course the caves proved very modest affairs, but there was a nice breeze, and as our boat spanked along we saw plenty of little blue-bayed cavelets, and went into a couple large enough to be dignified with the title of chambers. The prettiest part about them was the going into them, which our boatman managed with brilliant adroitness. We dashed in at full sail till it looked as if we must be hurled and smashed on the terrible dagger-pointed reefs which surround Syracuse, but, just at the last moment, about went the boat and down came the sail, and he rowed us in backwards through the narrow swirling entrance with the dexterity of a Japanese. We had to go in backwards so as to have the boat under management when we came

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out again into the swell which was beating on the rocks. The beauty of the caves lay chiefly in their red coralline sides, which were sometimes almost magenta in their intensity, and in their greenery-gallery sulphur stalactites. The effect of the red coral barnacles under the water was also very brilliant. The best cave was that of Neptune, which had some queer stalactites like bones, and others like camel's feet. There was coral all round the bottom of the caves, and there were queer little pot-holes in the top. We found the Due Fratelli, of which the boatman talked so much, to be an ominous-looking group of rocks islanded a good way out from the shore, containing a fine natural arch and, I should say, whole colonies of lobsters. With its reefs and its swirl it was just the devilish-looking sort of place which lobsters like. The caves were only moderately interesting to those who have seen the glories of the blue and white and green grottoes at Capri. But we had ample compensation. To begin with, it was exceedingly interesting to me to examine this coast, to enable me to understand why the Athenians had no choice but to disembark at Thapsos, which was too far off, or to risk their fleet in the harbour of Syracuse, where it was eventually blockaded and destroyed. The port of Trogilus is a mere landing-place for fine weather—a shallow bay which gives no protection.

SYRACUSE A LOW-LEVEL GIBRALTAR *

The whole seaward face of the part of ancient Syracuse which stood on the mainland is a natural fortress. The low cliff of cruel, sharp-reefed rocks is only accessible at one or two easily guardable points, and there is nearly always a nasty swell lifting itself on to the sharp reefs below. That rocky plateau shaped like a pear, with Cape S. Panagia and the island of Ortygia at each side of its thick end, and the Belvedere beyond the Castle of Euryalus for its stalk end, a plateau five or six miles long and about three miles wide in its broadest place, could, with a very few months' work, even in these days of modern artillery, be converted into an almost impregnable fortress. It has the open sea, with the boat harbour of Trogilus on

* See "Plan of Syracuse," chap. xii. p. 149.

MOUNT ETNA

one side, and the narrow-mouthed Great Harbour on the other, and a very little engineering would turn its natural rocks into unscalable ramparts. It is splendidly watered. The subterranean galleries in the Castle of Euryalus show how suitable its rocks are for turning into a fortress of the Gibraltar kind. If Italy and Sicily belonged to the French, instead of to the Italians, Syracuse, commanding as it does the entrance to the Straits of Messina, and threatening the passage between Sicily and Africa, would be one of the principal fortresses of Europe. Hardly any city of antiquity was more favourably placed for developing its commerce and preserving its independence.

THE VIEW OF ETNA FROM THE SEA

Witheridge was enjoying himself very much. He liked boating, especially sailing. He was delighted with the sensational way in which we entered the caves, he even appeared to be enraptured with the view of Etna, though I think part of his rapture was due to the fact that we were at last having a sail on the open sea instead of building up imaginary splendours on the foundations of ancient buildings. He never could see anything in foundations except lizards, he wished it was later on in the year so that we might see snakes. But he might well have been impressed with that view, for there was Etna without a cloud, rising as I have seen nothing else rise since I saw Fujiyama springing in all its splendour from the blue Hakone Lake. The trailing skirts of Etna swept right down to the sea, the flat-roofed, smokeless, yellow houses of Augusta looked no more than the hem upon its robe. Etna is only 10,000 feet high, but it is 180 miles round, and rising right up from the sea like that might have been the biggest thing in all the world.

YOU CANNOT GET AWAY FROM ETNA AT SYRACUSE

When you are at Syracuse you do not seem to be able to get away from Etna, unless you deliberately turn your back on it. All the time we were going to the Anapo we had Etna before us, and now we had Etna before us again, filling up the whole sea, as it

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seemed. And such a sapphire sea, with little crispings of white, which shone like diamonds in the breeze. And at this season of the year the effect was heightened by a yet further element of colour, for first came the sapphire sea, then the golden yellow sand and the golden yellow city, then the vast black form of the mountain, and, half-way up, a cloak of virgin snow, standing out against the sapphire sky. In the morning at Syracuse the sky is opalescent, the sea turquoise; the shadows of afternoon turn both to sapphire, and then, when sunset comes, Etna is converted into a huge pearl.

CHAPTER XX.

SYRACUSE A PARADISE OF WILD FLOWERS

SYRACUSE is a wonderful place for wild flowers; it has not, perhaps, any cornfield, any sandy river-valley, any bank so astonishing for the height and closeness and wealth of colour of its flowers as you get in particular places at Selinunte, but its variety is amazing, and its wild flowers are so intermingled with prodigal garden flowers.

THE TREES OF SYRACUSE

At first it would strike you that there were very few trees at Syracuse. The one prominent tree you see from the city proper is the tall stone pine which figures in every photograph of the *Latomia dei Cappuccini*. As you begin to know your way about you realise that there are a few small trees in the squares and a row of brilliantly blossoming trees, such as Coral trees, Judas trees, and Paulownias, on the Marina, near the Fountain of Arethusa. Then, as you begin to drive out of the town, you pass a few mulberries by the Agora. But when you get thoroughly into the part of Syracuse which is ancient and Greek, you realise its wonderful wealth of vegetation. Not that even there you see much of trees on the surface, for the finest grow in the various *latomias*, which are so many gardens. Above ground the trees you see are generally grey-foliaged olives, apple-green almond trees, and dark, thick-foliaged carobs. But trees are not the speciality of Syracuse, which deals more prodigally in shrubs, creepers, and meadow flowers. Take the *Latomia dei Cappuccini*, for instance. The ivy cataracts over grey limestone cliffs

IN SICILY

100 feet high, almost from top to bottom, while the upright spires of rock which have been left in the middle of these abysses when their roofs fell in beneath the stroke of the quarryman, are clothed with all manner of lesser creepers, such as the choice-blossomed caper. Round the Latomia dei Cappuccini shrubs are wonderful, the silvery vermouth-bushes and the rosemary grow four or five feet high, and three or four yards round. And marguerites and stocks grow almost as large. The bottom of the abyss is full of orange, lemon, olive, nespoli, fig, and almond trees, with violets growing under them, and lords-and-ladies, and comfrey.

WILD FLOWERS

But the wild flowers down in the latomias are nothing to those which grow in Madame Politi's garden above, and round the Greek Necropolis, in the Campo Santo and in the meadows on the way to the Castle of Euryalus. I suppose the most striking of the wild flowers of Syracuse is the wild gladiolus, of a colour between crimson and magenta, which makes bright patches in the corn. And out on the stony plateau, upon which the ancient quarter of Achradina stood, you get a fresh little flora, interesting but starved. You find here, for instance, in great quantities, the little blue Greek iris, which is so common on the Pnyx at Athens. The stately asphodel, which is so wonderfully beautiful when it is in its prime, with flowers (like the Prince of Wales's feathers, of the freshest pink, backed with brown) silhouetted against the blue March sky, and is such a ragged, disreputable-looking beggar of a plant when it is seeding, grows almost everywhere at Syracuse. I refer of course to the large variety with the iris leaf. The smaller variety, with the slender, round leaf like the rushes which grow in Richmond Park, is much less common, but is to be found near the bridge where you re-embark going up the Anapo. Numerous varieties of the cranes'-bill family are to be found in every open grassy space, including one rare one which we never see in England. The poppies, which are of a singularly rich crimson colour, are ubiquitous. The beautiful little scarlet Adonis, like a tiny anemone fulgens, with pale green

THE CHIEF WILD FLOWERS AT SYRACUSE

feathery leaves like the feverfew, grows wild in Madame Politi's garden, and profusely in the Campo Santo and certain cornfields on the way out to the Castle of Euryalus. The small variety of Canterbury bell, with a vivid purple flower, is to be found in most places, like the red and bright blue pimpernels and the borage. You frequently see the blue pimpernel, which is rather darker and even more conspicuous than the borage, growing intertwined with the common scarlet pimpernel. The borage of course is one of the notable flowers of Sicily; its blossom is almost as large as a pennypiece, and of the most brilliant sky-blue imaginable, though it has a lilac effect when you are not near it. It grows along every roadside—a miracle of colour and beauty. Its chief rivals are the huge white and lemon-coloured Sicilian daisies, which would be almost like the marguerites, cultivated in our gardens as they are in Sicilian gardens, except for the fact that the marguerites grow in a clump from a thick woody stem, while the Sicilian daisy has just one or two heads on a detached green stem, as the thornless roses grow at Assisi and the wild marguerites grow in England. Its stem is, however, much taller and tougher than our marguerites, just as its blossom is incomparably larger and more brilliant. It must have been these daisies which gave Sicily its name of "the Laughing Land," for the Sicilians are a most unsmiling people, and almost every bank and meadow, from Syracuse to Augusta, and at Selinunte and a hundred other places, at the season of the year glitters like the teeth of Sicilian women with these daisies.

Their closest rivals are the marigolds and spurges, but then the marigold never grows to any great size either in height or the diameter of its blossom, though its orange is in parts of Sicily so intense that it seems to fire the rocks and walls round which it clusters. There are at least four sorts growing about Syracuse—the common marigold, all orange; a smaller and finer variety; another small variety with a black heart; and the corn-marigold, which is much larger and yellower, almost like a daisy. The spurge, whether golden-flowered or green-flowered, is hardly so remarkable in Syracuse as it is in more mountainous places, where I have often

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seen it eight feet high, and with a woody stalk as thick as a man's arm. There are, of course, many spurges in Sicily, but the variety which grows to that size has conspicuous flowers, of a brilliant yellow, growing in bunches like cherries, and forming at the height of their season bright yellow beehives of a singularly regular shape. Gorse is found in Sicily, but I do not remember seeing it round Syracuse, nor are either the broom or the genesta, both of which grow to great size and flower very freely a little further north, to be found much there. The genesta, of course, which finds such favour in our suburbs in flower-pots, decorated with frilled paper, like hams, is a common wild flower in Sicily, as is the bird's-foot trefoil whose blossoms are so similar. The bird's-foot trefoil grows in great quantities round the Greek Necropolis, as do all the innumerable vetches, some of them parti-coloured, some of intense scarlet or crimson, which are as common as buttercups in Sicily. On the banks of the Anapo the yellow flag, or iris, often lights up the thick groves of papyrus, through which the clear, narrow river and the great barcas, full of laughing and curious tourists, wind their way. Out at the Castle of Euryalus, as has been mentioned, the sage with the large pale yellow flower which looks, a little way off, like a *calceolaria*; the yellow rue-flower; the deep crimson orpine; the wild snapdragon—generally pale yellow and white; the pink anemone; the creeping yellow flower which looks like a rock-rose; the wild onion looking like a small yucca; the asphodel; the plant like our orange and yellow toad-flax; and multitudes of vetches and tares grow. The great purple Sicilian anemone, like the little scarlet *adonis*, is commonest at the Campo Santo.

COMMON ENGLISH WILD FLOWERS AT SYRACUSE

The poppies, of course, are brilliant and universal, rich with every hue from scarlet to crimson. The grape-hyacinths are fruity in their fulness; the flax here and there make some farmer's patch a patch of blue. There are pink anemones as well as purple, though the former are not to be found in the fertile cornfields, but

ENGLISH WILD FLOWERS AT SYRACUSE

in dry olive gardens or amid the ruins of the Greek castle. The old walls are full of candy-tuft, and red, and white bladder campion, and yet another variety unfamiliar to me, grow by the way as is their wont. There is a special kind of mallow, not unlike the "wild geraniums," which will grow even at Brighton. And the flowers which we have always with us, like the poor in England, are likewise common objects in the great island of the South which so nearly touches Africa. Buttercups are there and kingcups and dandelions, and fool's parsley and red and white fumitory, with various cranes'-bills, some with terrific beaks and some like our own little homely herb robin; common thistles, sow thistles, and silver thistles; various clovers, one as huge and red as a new cricket ball; white and yellow cabbage; white convolvulus, pink convolvulus, pink and white convolvulus, blue and white convolvulus, the latter very brilliant and beautiful—as startling as the blue and white Sicilian tares, which often grow close by; burgloss, yellow and white toad flax, and wild mignonette; humble little Chaucer's daisies; Sicilian daisies as gorgeous as Cleopatra; ox-eyes, and feverfew; even a green daisy which is probably not a green daisy at all, but only looks like one; slightly rarer are bee and spider orchids, and wild garlic and henbane. The Sicilian lords-and-ladies smell so foul that you dare not pluck them. On the other hand, the dwarf peach-coloured wild Sicilian stock has hardly any sweetness, and the fragrance of the huge magenta stock, which is so glorious an appanage of Sicilian gardens, is wasted, when it grows wild, because it always chooses the top of a wall or half-way up a cliff for its habitat to protect it from the hand of the spoiler. No blossoms are more numerous by the wayside at Syracuse than those of the pig's-face, which botanists call *mesembryanthemum* and Italians *barba di Giove*, because when it turns sere in the autumn it is as golden as the beard of the king of the old gods. If there is an exception it is the Sicilian weed with its trefoil leaf and yellow musk-like flowers—the trefoli. The lemon groves in spring are carpeted with its green and gold, which gives the effect of the sward in Sandro Botticelli's "Prima Vera."

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THE TREES OF SYRACUSE

I cannot attempt to describe the garden flowers of Syracuse—irrigation will do anything in that fostering climate. I think the trees you see oftenest are olives and almonds and prickly-pears; and after them palms and bamboos and bananas, oranges and lemons in the gardens, and carobs in the fields. But there are quite a number of figs and wild figs (wild figs have a pretty taste in ruins), peaches and wild peaches, pears and wild pears, apples, pepper trees, tamarisks, cypresses, nespoli, and daturas, and of course vines, which are at Syracuse mostly grown in furrows like vegetables. There are a few splendid stone pines, and, in the avenues of the city, Coral trees, with flaming crimson blossoms, Judas trees, and Paulownias. The wild onion and wild fennel grow tall and rank, but man, and seemingly beast, despises them as food. The brambles often rival in height the tall brooms of the papyrus on the Anapo, and the acanthus is so impudently luxurious that it must hope to be mistaken for its cousin, the artichoke.

I have purposely left to the last the masses of rosemary and vermouth, cultivated and wild, the wild mint, the horse-mint, the peppermint, the wild sage, the wild thyme, and a score of other aromatic and health-giving herbs.

THE HERBALIST AT HOME

Sicily is one vast herbarium. In every old wall, on every uncultivated patch grows some medicinal herb. There are shops in every city devoted to the sale of dry herbs and looking like astrologers' dens. Every man, woman, and child knows the names of the herbs, and most adults are acquainted with their medicinal values. Fever looms large before the minds of poor Sicilians, though really the island is not at all malarious when compared with Sardinia. I for one should be sorry to see the faith in herbs die out in Sicily; it is one of the most mediæval touches in this last refuge of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON THE JAPPINESS OF SICILIAN GUIDES

I MAY not always exercise a good example, but nothing could be said against the example I set Stephana of exploring the mediæval beauties of Syracuse. Stephana was sure we ought to have a guide, and Gaetano, one of the factotums who hang about the Villa Politi in Southern fashion, was recommended as trustworthy. Madame Politi said she could trust him to do anything, he would bring her the change for a thousand-franc note all in good money. I am sure she could have trusted him to do nothing unless he was

obliged. He was waiting for us as soon as breakfast was done with a very ancient fly, whose bottom had a piece of highly polished brass nailed over it to equalise its surface. Witheridge came with us. He liked being near Stephana, even when she was sight-seeing, which he hated, and he liked walking with Gaetano and fooling him, which did not signify as Gaetano did not know sufficient English to understand the drift of the fooling. Although we protested that we wished to go straight into Syracuse, Gaetano insisted on our going first to the tomb and older church of



Photo by the Author.

A STREET IN MEDIÆVAL SYRACUSE

Showing the basket crinolines in which ladies are taught to stand and walk

IN SICILY

S. Lucia, which were nearest. "You want Sicilian-Gotico?" he said, "I show you," which is exactly what a Japanese would have said. Gaetano was very like a Jap with his aping of the costume of well-dressed foreigners and his mixture of guilelessness and cunning.

S. LUCIA

He did, however, know the meaning of the word Gothic, and was prepared to be reproached when he led us into the cloister of S. Lucia, which is now a cavalry stable. It had a poor Renaissance colonnade with only one side complete, but there was a splendid mass of snapdragon springing from a broken pier on the other side, and the well you usually find in the centre of a Sicilian cloister. It was only picturesque in its ruin, and was disfigured with inscriptions such as "*Cavalli palfrenieri*" and "*Stazione di Cavalli stalloni*," but there were some queer seventeenth-century frescoes in the porch which had seats all round like a Devonshire church-porch.

"There is nothing Gothic, you villain, Gaetano," I said in Italian. "You see," he said, leading us through an ugly but not unpleasing colonnade into the upper church, which has quite a fine seventeenth-century tomb of Antonius Platomone, Baron of Prioli—a mural tablet of inlaid coloured marbles.

CATACOMBS AGAIN

"There is nothing Gothic here, either," I growled. He took no notice, but ostentatiously lighting some candle-stumps led me along a passage which opened into a catacomb, at the head of which was a fine terra-cotta coffin shaped something like an amphora. A flight of steps led down between rows of coffin-shaped niches with a few marks of frescoes. At the end on the left was another staircase which led into a chamber with more coffin-shaped niches, while on the right there was a salita which led to the catacombs of S. Giovanni. Syracuse, like other Sicilian towns, has catacombs instead of cellars. He spared us the trip to S. Giovanni, which we felt was very good of him, or rather, I should say I, for this

WHERE S. LUCIA WAS MARTYRED

was just the sort of thing which pleased Witheridge, to whom architectural terms were gibberish.

S. LUCIA

He conducted us instead to the subterranean baptistery which contains the tomb of S. Lucia, a rather good specimen of the Bernini style. "You see that?" said Gaetano, and he went on to tell us in Italian that there was a cavern underneath it, the tomb of the saint, and that she was buried on the very spot where she had been martyred. "And I suppose," said Stephana, "that vast numbers of pilgrims come every year to the body of such a famous saint?" "Oh, the body isn't there," he answered; "the Venetians took that away, hundreds of years ago." But he did not seem to think that it was of any consequence. Indeed, so callous was he upon the matter of S. Lucia that we discovered that the candles with which we had been exploring the catacombs came from her altar, to which he restored what was left of them. The floor is inlaid with valuable marble, and there is a good deal of a rare light green marble, brought from Constantinople, and Oriental alabaster about the tomb. But what pleased Gaetano most was a wonderful curtain over the altar, which looked like a curtain, but was really made of inlaid marbles—an interesting monument of the dexterity and tastelessness of the seventeenth century. "There," he said, "I told you that we must come to S. Lucia." "But there is nothing Gothic about this," I groaned. "Ah, Gothic," he said, "I show you." I did not believe him in the least, but Stephana was always credulous, and Witheridge followed like a dog, who does not know or care where he is going but just likes going out with his owner. Gaetano took us outside and led us pompously round the church. There he showed us with intense pride a four-storied Norman tower with a charming Sicilian-Gothic gate. It was distinctly a score for Gaetano.

THE MINOR PALACES

Gaetano never got names quite right except where the name was that of the present proprietor of an ancient palace. In Sicily,

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as in many parts of Italy, they have the unfortunate habit of changing the name of a palace with each successive owner. This is quite logical, for the house, in fact, has no name. It is simply the dwelling of such a man, the property of such a man. Fortunately they do not change hands very often, for the custom of adoption prevents great families dying out. Close by S. Lucia are the foundations of a Roman building, laid bare probably when they were making the railway, for it is right against the line. The antiquarian's name for this is the House of Agathocles, but Gaetano called it the Temple of Agratico. It is really neither one nor the other, but the arsenal of Dionysius I., alluded to above. The stone slips on which he built his triremes are still perfect, though only a few of them are to be seen. The arsenal is close to what the natives to this day call the Marble



Photo by Sonnet.

THE MARBLE HARBOUR OF DIONYSIUS
Modern Syracuse and the Great Harbour in the background.

MINOR PALACES AND SPANISH BALCONIES

Harbour, meaning that part of the Small Harbour which was artificially extended by Dionysius I.'s marble breakwater. It is said that he had made it large enough to contain the whole Syracusan fleet.

We had wasted too much time over S. Lucia, and I made Gaetano hurry into town. I was anxious to see whether he really did know of any Gothic buildings which had escaped my notice, and he did. The Via Dione was his special street, a street I had not up to this particularly noticed. The first house to which he took us, No. 17 I think, had a courtyard with a few Gothic features in its gallery, a staircase and well, and a good Gothic doorway, with a hood-moulding resting on heads. No. 8 had a Sicilian-Gothic window and fine fifteenth-century masonry. The Casa Specchi, next door, is a fine old house, but its chief feature is a good Renaissance balcony-bracket. To those in search of Gothic bits this street is worthy of close examination, but it contains nothing striking, like the really exquisite windows of the Palazzo Montalto and the Palazzo Lanza. As Witheridge said, "A fool could see *them*, but the other business was too museumy." "Where is that Palazzo Ardizzone you were telling me about—the one you showed me a picture of?" asked Stephana. "That is in the Via Roma, isn't it, Gaetano?" Gaetano shrugged his shoulders, and professed never to have heard of it. "Oh, but there is such a place," I said. "I saw it myself when I was in Syracuse in 1896." He did not believe me in the least, though he was too polite to do more than smile. I then showed him a drawing by Madame Politi's husband. He looked at it in a pitying sort of way, till he caught the name of Salvatore Politi. "Ah!" he said, "I know." "Well, find it," I said; "I think it is in the Via Roma." We drove up and down the Via Roma patiently, not altogether fruitlessly; because it gave Stephana the opportunity of examining the great Spanish balconies, the finest of which are in this street. It is also the leading business street, but in Syracuse that does not mean much. It is not so busy, for instance, as to make it impossible for macaroni to be drying in sieves on the side-walk. Gaetano pointed us out what he called the Casa Platina, next to S. Spirito with its ancient lions,

IN SICILY

and a beautiful iron bracket, made to counterfeit vine tendrils. Gaetano had good taste, or rather perhaps one should say good judgment. He himself preferred something large and florid, like the new house, covered with monstrous heads at the bottom of the Via Maestranza, but when he perceived what we, especially Stephana, liked, he was very quick in pointing out examples.

THE PALAZZO ARDIZZONE

At last I recognised my palace by its having a balcony looking on a side street, but the hand of the destroyer had been busy in the short years of our absence, and the exquisite fourteenth-century terrace staircase, the finest in all Syracuse, had disappeared. The exterior of the palace, which is quite handsome in its way, did not look as if it had so much as a coat of paint added to its persiani, but the interior had been converted. How thankful I am that I saw it before it went! The noble cortile, with its Gothic arches, carrying an arcaded gallery of five bays, approached by a sweeping, terraced staircase of the fourteenth century, has utterly disappeared. Such a gracious piece of the Middle Ages as it was, too, with its great creeper sweeping up from the courtyard and drooping over four of the five arches. One cannot understand why anything should be altered in Syracuse, least of all a monument of its former domestic splendour, which had survived five hundred years or more. The dictates of commerce could not have demanded it, they do not demand anything in Syracuse. And there is ample room for any quantity of buildings just exactly where they are wanted in the great bare space between the two ports. In the last few years, too, they have pulled down the fatal bastions of Carlo Quinto, for which so many an ancient building was sacrificed, including the Roman amphitheatre. This has made way for a new Sahara avenue and a Chamber of Commerce. They might have waited for the commerce before they effaced these footsteps, Vandal footsteps though they were, of the most powerful monarch who ever wore the Sicilian crown.

Stephana almost wept to find that the Ardizzone cortile, cool and

THE GHETTO

green, even at the brazen pitch of summer, had not been spared just two more years to gladden the eyes of the daughter of a country which has no Middle Ages—nothing between the Northmen's tower, built in the dark ages at Newport, and the convents of the men who came after Columbus.



THE PALAZZO ARDICRONE, VIA ROMA

From a drawing by Salvatore Politi. For description see page 205.

THE GHETTO (*Giudecca*)

Then we made our way to the Ghetto. Stephana had an idea, founded on a wildly enthusiastic study of Mr. Zangwill's Ghetto library, that all ghettos were picturesque and interesting. The Giudecca at Syracuse certainly contains some of the city picturesquities, but the chief interest about it lies in the fact that Syracusan Jews look so well fed and so prosperous compared with the other inhabitants of the poorer parts of the city. The Syracusan Jews are amazingly like any other prosperous Jew tradesmen, which proves, I take it, that they have kept their blood very pure.

IN SICILY

THE LATOMIA IN THE CENTRE OF SYRACUSE

I had been told by all the wiseacres, though none of them had ever seen it, that the great sight of the Syracusan Ghetto was the church of S. Felipe, which has a wonderful crypt, a regular latomia like those you get outside the city. I had an eager desire to see this latomia, and Gaetano said it would be perfectly simple. We drove there, and I thought he was some time in procuring the services of the sacristan—the church, of course, was locked, like any other Sicilian church, at any hour you would be likely to visit it; they are apt to be open from six to eight in the morning. When he did come he was surrounded by about twenty ruffians, who proceeded, as soon as the church was open, to make preparations to move the inside porch of woodwork with heavy leather curtains, an inch and a half thick, which you have to force back in order to squeeze in. I thought this rather an extreme measure, but waited to see what would happen; it revealed an enormous paving-stone firmly embedded in the floor, and crowbars were then produced. I forget how long it was they said since it had been opened last, but it was not less than twenty years, I think. I stopped them. I had no idea of inviting fever by being the first to enter the damp crypt of a Sicilian church where miasma had been accumulating without chance of escape for twenty years. So I told Gaetano to make whatever present was necessary, and to say that I did not wish the church to be disturbed so much. When we had got into the carriage and were driving off I asked how much he had given them, and he said, "Twenty centimes" (which is rather less than twopence) "between them," though I afterwards found that he had a most extravagant view of his own services.

THE JULIET WINDOW IN THE GIUDECCA

They were quite satisfied, and insisted on showing me the charming little loggia, with which I was already perfectly acquainted, on a house in the piazza in front of S. Giovanni. It is a double-arched recess half-way up a house in the little Piazza del Precursore,

PALAZZO DANIELI AND ITS GLORIOUS BALCONY

upon which the church of S. Giovanni stands, and the most beautiful bits in the Ghetto are this little loggia and this little church, which has a nice little Sicilian rose window over a plain Gothic doorway, with graceful little clustered columns and a choir arch inside, old but horribly painted. Stephana was pleased with the picturesqueness of being swept off by a score of dirty vagabonds to see an artistic bit, and opened her heart and her ever-ready purse to them, while Gaetano looked on with an air which meant disapproval, or at any rate, "You know this is very irregular."

THE VIA MAESTRANZA

From the Giudecca I insisted upon Gaetano taking us to the Via Maestranza, though I had started out upon the general principle of giving him his head, thinking that I should learn most this way. But I wanted to console Stephana for the loss of the Ardizzone Palace, and in my heart of hearts wanted to show Witheridge that mediæval Syracuse was not entirely made up of remnants.

THE PALAZZO DANIELI AND ITS GLORIOUS BALCONY

The Palazzo Danieli at No. 21, Via Maestranza, has the best Spanish balcony in all Syracuse. The lower part of the palace, which is a Gothic building of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, has been converted to the Renaissance style, in order to enlarge its windows and to add the superb balcony which sweeps along its entire front, rendered doubly effective by the fact that the house is built in a sort of crescent following the bend of the street. The hammered ironwork of its balcony bows out royally, and is adorned with splendid flamboyant roses, and the ironwork runs without a break the whole length of the house. The top story has never been converted, but still has its range of small Sicilian-Gothic windows. The reason why Gaetano had displayed some hesitation in taking us there was that, as usual, he did not know it by its older name of the Palazzo Danieli, but as soon as we arrived in sight of it he volunteered to show us the Palazzo Imbelliziere—Pisani, or something which sounded like that.

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As we were both in search of the same thing, I allowed him to call it what he liked. He was, after all, of some use, because I do not think that without him we should have had the impudence to walk into the courtyard and up the terraced fifteenth-century stairway into the lovely little three-bayed arcade of 1638, carried in a gallery across the archway through which we had entered. Right over the foot of the stair is a square Sicilian-Gothic window, which still retains its slender shaft. The courtyard has its mounting-stone and its vine, and reminds one very much of the courtyards in the palaces of the minor nobles at Marsala, which are now inhabited by poor people. Oddly enough, while No. 21, Via Maestranza, is such a gem, No. 22 is the house which I have alluded to elsewhere as the worst monstrosity in Syracuse, with its rows of grinning heads, worthy of the Prince of Pallagonia. Fortunately they are on opposite sides of the street. We paused a moment to look at a very good carved head on the house at the corner of the Via Maestranza and the Via Alagona. The Casa Mezzo has a terraced cortile and a good little Renaissance window over it. Then I made Gaetano turn back up the Via Maestranza to show us the courtyard of the old Leon D'Oro Restaurant, which is perhaps on the whole the finest left in Syracuse, with its tiers of Renaissance arcades. Being a restaurant, Gaetano, as the factotum of the first hotel in the city, looked upon it with contempt. Its architectural splendour did not to his mind affect the situation, and when I tried to extort his admiration for it he pointed with scorn to a board, which bore the announcement "*Pensione, 15 francs a week,*" but he allowed us to examine the little Ronco Capo Bianco, which has a good little Sicilian-Gothic window on its right-hand side, and a charming bit for the artist at its end. Indeed, most houses in this part of Syracuse have some architectural detail which, whether it is good art or not, is a mighty good subject for an artist. After this I allowed Gaetano to have a field-day, as Witheridge would have expressed it, to drive us to the corner of the Piazza Archimede and make us get out with a great air of mystery, because he was going to show us something very fine. He rose to the occasion so magnificently that he almost

THE WINDOW IN THE PALAZZO MONTALTO

put his finger to his lips to enjoin silence, as he made a start along a narrow lane and brought us up in front of the Palazzo Montalto with the air of one who had discovered it the day before, and knew that no one else had seen it.

THE PALAZZO MONTALTO

Now, the Palazzo Montalto bears about the same relation to Syracuse as Westminster Abbey does to London. Everyone has heard of it before, and goes straight to it the first time he enters the city. Its picture is the first thing you see on a hotel table. If a guide-book had only one illustration it would be the Palazzo Montalto. We had all seen it several times before, but we pretended that it came upon us a perfect surprise, and Witheridge asked if it was the cathedral.

"The cathedral! No, signor," said Gaetano with a fine scorn,

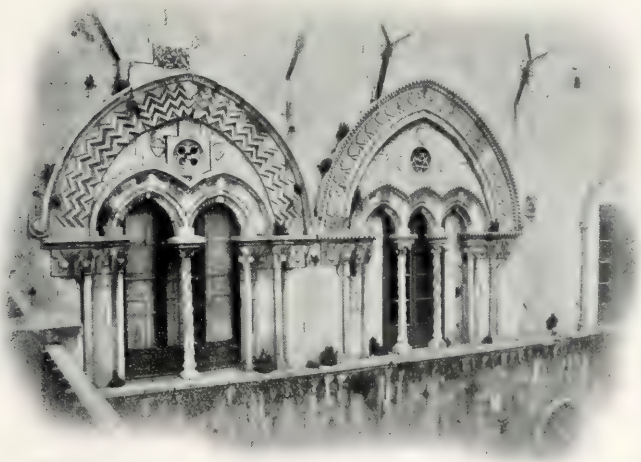


Photo by Leon.

DONNA RUSIDDA'S WINDOW IN THE PALAZZO MONTALTO

IN SICILY

but as if the scorn was intended for the cathedral, and not for Witheridge's ignorance.

The Palazzo Montalto does not, as you might imagine, consist of a couple of windows and the bit of masonry surrounding them floating about in the air. These windows have been photographed hundreds of times, but no one, as far as I know, ever thought of photographing any other part of this noble old fourteenth-century building except just those two windows, and as much of the surrounding building as he was compelled to take in. And yet it is a fine mass, with a great many beautiful and ancient architectural details besides the two windows, which are certainly grand examples of Sicilian-Gothic, standing as they do, one of them, with a singularly graceful central shaft, and the other with two, in recesses with very richly decorated heads. They form part also of a very original and delicate colonnade. Undoubtedly the palace must have been one of great splendour and beauty before its decay, though if he were only aware of its existence the ordinary tourist would be far more highly impressed with the Casa Normanna in the Salita S. Antonio, just behind the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele at Palermo, which has about eight such windows, though in a coarse style. A closer parallel for those who have not time to visit Syracuse may be found in the Palace of the Inquisition at Palermo, where similar windows of about the same date, and wonderfully rich, have been laid bare a year or two back. The palace has a cortile, with interesting and picturesque details, but the grand staircase loses in effect by not being open, but carried up behind arches in a way which reminds the irreverent Cockney of the Metropolitan Railway station at Victoria. It was at the Palazzo Montalto that Donna Rusidda lived, and most of the Syracusan scenes in my novel *The Admiral* are laid.

OLD BITS IN THE VIA GARGALLO

Having duly pandered to Gaetano's vanity in acknowledgment of his great discovery of the Palazzo Montalto at Syracuse, I made him take us down the queer little back streets about here, which

THE WINDOW IN THE PALAZZO LANZA

abound in ruined picturesqueness. Down such a street is the Opera Pia Gargallo, which is at No. 38, Via Gargallo, and has a courtyard with a fine Gothic arcade, and a sweeping stairway with Gothic mouldings, marking the position of each stair on the balustrade of solid masonry. There is a well in the corner in a sort of tower carried up to the wide terrace. No one who takes any interest in architecture should miss this highly characteristic courtyard, which is now devoted to a charity. On the other side of the Via Gargallo is a house with a charming triple braiding at the top. It is not easy to describe all the delightful details which the artist will find in this nest of old streets. I can best express it by saying that a little scream of pleasure came from Stephana every minute, that we were a very long time in them, and that Witheridge began to get very chummy with Gaetano.

THE PALAZZO LANZA IN THE PIAZZA ARCHIMEDE

We gradually worked our way back to the Piazza Archimede, where I had the satisfaction of pointing out to Gaetano a bit he had never noticed, though he was a guide, and had been in Syracuse all his life—the exquisitely delicate window on the first floor of the Palazzo Lanza, which stands at the corner of the piazza and the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele, and



Photo. G. G. G.
THE SARACENIC WINDOW IN THE PALAZZO LANZA

IN SICILY

is, with its delicate single shaft and arabesqued headings, the most fairy-like window in all Syracuse, and I think one might almost say Sicily. It is almost the only notable detail left on the exterior of the house. The window is over the Farmacia del Popolo.

AN INTELLIGENT CABMAN THE ONLY GUIDE WORTH HAVING

Gaetano did not show us the Palazzo Bellomo, with its noble fortress front, or the Palazzo Miliaccio, with its fifteenth-century terrace, or the Castle of Maniace, or the convent of Santa Lucia—the gem of the Sicilian Renaissance—or the cathedral, or the archbishop's palace, or the museum, or anything else. He just thought he had shown us enough to maintain the character of Syracuse, and in a large sort of way suggested that it was time to go home. He did not know that the net result of his morning's effort was to further convince me of the uselessness of guides. The only kind of guide worth having is an intelligent cabman, who understands that you will go on employing him just so long as he ferrets out interesting things for you to look at, and can tell you more about them than other cabmen. We always found in Japan that an intelligent riksha boy was the best guide for soulless Europeans like ourselves, content with skin-deep beauty.

CHAPTER XXII.

SYRACUSE A MEDIÆVAL CITY

I DO not believe that there are many English who love the city of Syracuse as I do. "Dirty place!" and "Beastly hole!" are the kind of epithets I have heard most of them apply to it, and yet to me there is something especially fascinating about this dear old mediæval city. I do not call it mediæval because it is full of Gothic remains; as a matter of fact it is not, except in fragments of masonry not always easily to be deciphered. Of Gothic palaces, Gothic churches, Gothic doorways, there are only a few. I call Syracuse mediæval because it still lives in mediæval seclusion, just minding its own business—Syracuse that was once the principal city of the world.

It is the centre of a rich agricultural district, and it sells produce to Malta, and that is all it does except support a hierarchy culminating in an archbishop and much given to schools.

WHAT THE SYRACUSANS ARE LIKE

It takes you all day long to go a hundred miles by rail from Syracuse, probably because the natives consider travelling by rail a form of entertainment, and would resist not being entertained for a whole day when they had paid their money. There is some difficulty in getting even syphons in Syracuse, and there is nothing a woman would call a shop there. It is not modern enough to have cheap cabs, though the Syracusan cabby, who is much more like a Neapolitan than a Palermitan, rather enjoys bargaining for

IN SICILY

below his fare. For some reason Syracusans are distinctly livelier than most Sicilians, and apparently idler, though you can never tell when a Sicilian is really idle because there is not enough work to go all round, and the poorest man has the air of a gentleman at large when he cannot get anything to do (at sixpence a day!) A poor Sicilian is a gentleman, but the educated Sicilian who is not a gentleman is apt to be a terrific bounder. He is all cane and cigarette, and is not fit to black the boots of the peasant who strides along the dusty road with his head tied up in a red pocket-handkerchief, and who often looks as if he were a cross between a mediæval baron and a Red Indian.

THE BOUNDERS OF SYRACUSE

Syracuse has its share of bounders in black-banded, white felt hats, because it is full of educational establishments, and there is really nothing for people to do when they are educated except to stand about the streets and show themselves off. These people spoil Syracuse, but fortunately they prefer to exhibit themselves in the piazza and the Via Roma and the broad, sunny space in front of the cathedral, so that it is easy to escape from them into the quiet back streets which sleep in the repose of many centuries, for Syracuse has had few events to excite it since the Normans took it from the Saracens eight hundred years ago.

MODERN SYRACUSE'S NICHE IN HISTORY

But, subsequently to this, it never touched history again until the tough old Dutch Admiral De Ruyter, after all his stiff fights in the Channel with Blake and Rupert of the Rhine, died here from the wounds he received in an action with the French off Augusta. The Normans secured their victory with the castle built by Giorgio Maniace, which still stands, deflowered of all but the fragments of its beauty. But five hundred years later the Emperor Charles V. wrought incalculable damage on the monuments of ancient Syracuse beyond the walls, to build fortifications which never were of any use,

SPANISH BALCONIES & MEDIEVAL COURTYARDS

and came very near being pounded to pieces by our own Nelson when the Governor of Syracuse refused him water on his way to the Battle of the Nile.

But for the most part Syracuse just went on minding its own business from the time—beginning at the thirteenth century—when a Bellomo or a Montalto built himself a fortress palace, with its grim walls lightened at the top with exquisite details of the Sicilian-Gothic begotten by Norman architects upon Saracen art.

THE BALCONIES OF SYRACUSE

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the nobles and prelates of Syracuse evolved a Renaissance of their own in which noble Spanish balconies play the important part. I know of no city except Verona where you find ironwork more beautiful than the balustrades of the balconies of Syracuse. There is a strong family likeness in most of these balconies; they consist generally of a broad slab of stone supported on heavy stone brackets, and surmounted by a hammered iron balustrade bulging out like the bow of a first-rate, and covered with flamboyant Tudor roses about a foot across, with bosses in high relief and flaring petals. These balconies are sometimes surmounted by delicate frames of ornamental ironwork for carrying the awnings so indispensable for half the Sicilian year. A very good example, with the awning frame, is to be found at the Palazzo Danieli, in the Via Maestranza.

THE CORTILI OF SYRACUSE

Mediaeval courtyards were formerly a feature of Syracuse, but there are very few left now earlier than the Renaissance. The most beautiful architecturally, that of the Palazzo Ardizzone, in the Via Roma (see page 285), has been destroyed since 1896. It had an open terrace stairway going round two of its sides, with a solid balustrade of fine fourteenth-century masonry terminating in a column surmounted by a lion. The upper part of the stairway was carried over an arch, one side of which sprang from a very bold bracket, and at the top there was a charming arcading, while there was a window looking

IN SICILY

over its foot with a very delicate Sicilian-Gothic shaft. The Palazzo Ardzrone was one of the gems left from mediæval Syracuse, and its conversion into shops, or something of the kind, was a terrible act of Vandalism. As I have said above, there is still a fine staircase of this description at the charitable institution in the Via Gargallo known as the Opera Pia Gargallo. It is even a good deal larger, but it has not the same symmetry, and it lacks the exquisite arcade. It is, however, very well worth a visit, because, in spite of its present humiliation, it gives one such a good idea of what Syracuse palace courtyards were like in the Middle Ages. I can recall only one other

still in existence which I have seen, though there is probably one in the Palazzo Bellomo, inaccessible on account of its forming part of a convent.

This is to be found in a most unpromising place—in the utterly modern-looking house with a clock over it on the Piazza Archimede. It lacks the mediæval repose of the Ardzrone Palace. It has not the exquisite creeper-grown, five-arched arcade; but it has the lion staircase-end, and the delicate single-shafted window looking out on it, and the noble solid-balustraded fourteenth-



Photo by E. B. Cochrane.

THE CORTILE OF THE HOUSE WITH THE CLOCK
PIAZZA ARCHIMEDE

century terrace-stairway, carried round two sides of the court upon bold Gothic arcades, and is very fine, finer, if it were not for its unsympathetic surroundings, than that of the Opera Pia Gargallo.

Coming to the Renaissance palaces, the Palazzo Bosco, nearly opposite the cathedral, and the palace occupied by the Inland Revenue

OTHER MEDIÆVAL REMAINS

authorities, have both of them charming courtyards, as has the palace now known as the Leon D'Oro Restaurant. Most Sicilian palaces have a well, the mediæval inclining to place it under the arch which carries the upper part of the stairway, and the Renaissance in the centre of the cortile surmounted by an ornamental well-head.

THE PALAZZO MILIACCIO AND PALAZZO BELLOMO

The old palaces which have not suffered much alteration in their exterior, like the Palazzo Bellomo or the Palazzo Miliaccio, are apt to have their lower walls pierced only with loopholes, like the former, or blank, like the latter, which has unfortunately only one story now standing. The terrace over the gateway of the Palazzo Miliaccio is supported with heavy stone brackets and decorated with a zigzag of black lava and white marble, something in the style of the Taormina palaces. It is close to the entrance of the Castle of Maniace. The gateway has unfortunately been modernised here; though at the Bellomo it is unaltered. The Palazzo Bellomo is very well worth study, though unfortunately only the *basso*, a lofty and finely-vaulted chamber, now inhabited by a poor family, who keep a shop in it, is accessible, since it belongs, as the *grilles* in the upper windows show, to the adjoining nunnery. It has several charming Sicilian-Gothic windows in the upper story, and at one end you can clearly see where a turret was built out to flank two sides of this mansion-fortress. It possesses, after the Palazzo Montalto and the Palazzo Lanza on the Piazza Archimede, the finest Sicilian-Gothic windows in Syracuse. But it has nothing else of any interest visible from the exterior. It stands at the back of S. Lucia, on the Piazza adjoining the church of S. Martino.

OTHER MEDIÆVAL REMAINS IN SYRACUSE

There are a few palaces with Gothic details in the Via Nizza and the Via Dione, and the city contains some churches with Gothic west doors and rose windows, which are generally shamefully modernised inside. Among them may be quoted S. Martino, close to the Palazzo

IN SICILY

Bellomo, S. Giovanni in the Giudecca, S. Maria dei Miracoli, near the Porta-a-Mare, which has a fine doorway built by the Comacien Masters about the twelfth century.

THE WALLS OF SYRACUSE

The walls with which Syracuse is still surrounded, except where the Marina or Foro Vittorio Emmanuele stretches, are, of course, mostly mediæval, though parts are of classical antiquity, as are the stones of the arcaded wall of Charles V.'s fortifications opposite the prison. And there is near the castle a subterranean *lavandaio*, or washing-pool, of great antiquity, which is well worth examination.

THE BOUNDARIES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN SYRACUSE

Apart from the museum, you can see the modern city of Syracuse fairly well in a single day, because most of its architectural graces consist of details of exteriors or courtyards, and it only covers one of the five districts of ancient Syracuse. Ancient Syracuse covered the island of Ortygia, and nearly all the land between the Great Harbour on one side and the Mediterranean on the other, as far as the Castle of Euryalus. Only the rocky plateau, it is true, was walled in the mainland portion, but outside of it were such trifles as the Greek theatre, the altar of hecatombs (Ara), and, in Roman times, the palestra and the amphitheatre, besides numerous other sacred buildings which have completely perished. The space between the long Walls of Dionysius and the Great Harbour was, in fact, the quarter of the sacred buildings in Greek times, and other public buildings in peaceful Roman times. The Greeks, in their arrogance, never contemplated a serious attack from anyone but Greeks, to whom, of course, an altar or a temple or a theatre, which was in theory a temple of Dionysus, were sacred. And the Romans at the time when they began to adorn Syracuse, were rapidly becoming masters of the world. It was not, therefore, necessary for this group of public buildings to be within walls. Ancient Syracuse is supposed to have contained between a million and half a million souls at the time when it was the largest city in the world; modern Syracuse contains about twenty

THE CITY GATE

thousand, and is practically all included in the rock-bound island of Ortygia. In approaching it from the railway station or the Villa Politi, you have to cross moat after moat, one of which, at any rate, has a drawbridge to allow ships to pass from the Little Harbour to the Great Harbour, and all of which have ramparts of classical or mediæval erection, more or less razed, or perhaps *demolished* would be a better word. These moats are crossed by bridges with a handrail about a foot inside each edge.

THE MILCH ANIMALS OF SYRACUSE

After a heavy storm they become mere aqueducts of mud, when it is prudent to follow Stephana's example and walk outside the railings, though it means a climb at each end. It is not easy to describe Syracusan mud, for the country carts jolt slowly, slowly in all day long, and all the milch animals of the city are driven in and out twice a day across those narrow bridges. Milk-pails are not used in Sicily; the animals themselves are driven to the customer's door, except in the best parts of the very large cities. No one in Naples or Sicily would trust a milkman, and the animals which yield milk, nearly all of which are goats, know their customers just as well as their masters do. I have often heard of goats finding their way alone from the streets to a customer on the top floor. As Witheridge said, there is very little a goat does not know, except how to behave.

AT THE CITY GATE

Syracuse has a very imposing gate, with a handsome Arabic inscription, called the Porta Marina or Porta-a-Mare. But that is not its real gate so much as the *octroi* station in the waste piece of ground, which is a Sahara when it is not a swamp, just outside the city, and inside the innermost moat. This is quite an entertaining place, for apart from the swarm of *octroi* officers, of course in uniform—even the dustman has a uniform in Sicily—who stand armed with rapier-like spits to probe the contents of the country carts, all sorts of humble trades are plied there. Forage for beast, and bread and

IN SICILY

wine for man, are of course most prominent ; but there are also queer little Japanese-like booths where vegetables are sold, and the Sicilian vegetable shops are always blazes of colour, arranged with great taste, be they never so humble.

HAWKERS

There may also be a bakery on wheels, furnace and all, with its top decorated with a row of twists ; a boot-hawker, generally a small boy, with a bamboo slung from his neck, and the boots hung on that as close as they will go. Men and women sit down and try them on in the street. In Syracuse the water-sellers do not, as a rule, carry a brass stand full of tumblers, lemons, and essence bottles in one hand and a pitcher of water in the other, as they do in Palermo ; they incline to a row of little water-barrels on a low trolley drawn by a donkey. The charcoal-sellers use similar trolleys, perhaps six or eight feet long by two feet wide. They often combine other trades with charcoal selling, carrying on their trolleys brushes and various articles, which, like patent medicines, make the

difference between a store-grocer and an old-established grocer. In Syracuse the very linen-draper is peripatetic, and they do not always aspire to a hand or donkey barrow ; plenty of them carry their stocks on their head, done up in a huge dust-sheet, though the Sicilian man is not so good at

carrying things on his head as the Sicilian woman. He would doubtless send her out carrying his draper's shop on her head



*Photo by
the Author*

WOMAN CARRYING WASHING ON HER HEAD

SHOPS AT SYRACUSE

if he thought he could trust her. She is saved by his Oriental suspicion of her integrity as a wife, and he shuts her up at home instead.

None of these people ever ask you to buy anything. Unless he is a curio-hawker, the Sicilian never seems to care whether you buy his wares or not. You would imagine that he found that his wares were essential to the existence of the community, and that it was rather a favour on his part allowing them to be sold.

THE SHOPS OF SYRACUSE

There are, it is true, shops for provisions in Syracuse, rather like the horrid-looking provision shops in China Town, at Victoria, except for the white cheese or butter made from goat's milk, and tied up with wonderful neatness in bundles of green rushes and split bamboo. There are even a few jewellers, but I had to try nearly every one in the town before I could get a key to fit my watch. And there are, of course, shops innumerable with the inscription "*Salè e tabacchi*," where the Government monopolies of salt and tobacco are sold, and stamps and halfpenny note-books, and the cheap toilet requisites which are sold as European in Japan. But there is no good curio-shop in Syracuse, and only about one shop which could fairly be called a bookseller's. If you substituted curio-shops for churches and dressed the people up in kimonos it would not be easy to tell the poorer streets in Syracuse from similar streets in Japan, and they are both of them perfectly delightful, full of dear, simple people living on next to nothing and smiling through life on it, not in the least afraid of death, though the Sicilian is for warlike qualities the very antipodes of the warrior Japanese.

BASSI

The shops at Syracuse are like other Sicilian shops—*bassi*. The *basso* is a ground-floor room which has no windows, but of which nearly the whole front is occupied by huge stable doors. The houses on the right-hand side as you go from Hammersmith Bridge to the Ranelagh Club have many of them stables underneath them,

IN SICILY

which give exactly the appearance of the Sicilian *basso* when it is closed. The doors, of course, have to be kept wide open all day, to let in the light and to allow of the display of wares—mostly food-stuffs, or charcoal, or other things needed for cookery. A few shops in Syracuse, and most of those in the great towns, have the doors taken away and glass fronts substituted, as in an English shop. Where they differ from an English shop is that they are hardly ever built as shops, but are frankly converted cellars and stables of the most contracted fashion. There are jewellers' shops in Palermo of this kind, containing in their tiny windows many thousands of pounds' worth of jewellery.

THE MARINA AT SYRACUSE

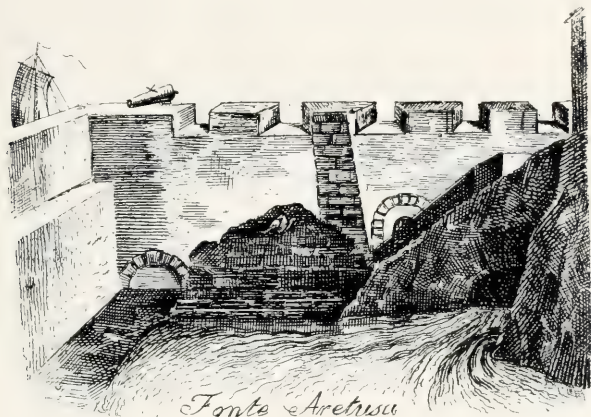
But I am anticipating, for there are not many shops until you pass into the compact mass of the city itself, and, in fact, as I have said, there are not many anywhere. Those who do not wish to be disappointed in Syracuse, and have no eye for the beauty of the little bits of mediæval life which are crystallised and preserved alive in a city like this, should not go into the city until they have first visited the Marina, called here the Foro Vittorio Emmanuele, and the Fountain of Arethusa. There can be no two words about them.

The veriest 'bus-driver—and I take it that the 'bus-driver is about as insensible to anything outside horses as a human animal can be; he does not even take an interest in politics, which is a pity, as he is of respectful Conservative instincts—even a 'bus-driver could not fail to be impressed by the beauty of this harbour-front at Syracuse. The bright blue waters of one of the most famous bays in the world swim lazily against a long terrace of jet black masonry and numerous broad flights of shallow steps, on to which sunburnt boatmen spring from gaily painted barcas to offer to take you to the mouth of the Anapo by day, and the Malta packet at eve. The inner side of the terrace is the Passeggiata, or drive, of Syracuse. It has a pretty avenue of foreign-looking trees, like the purple-flowered Judas tree and the scarlet-flowered Coral tree. Underneath the trees are marble seats of classical pattern, and at its further end, separated by the Capitaneria of the port, is the famous Fountain of Arethusa.

THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA

THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA

It always gave Nelson great pleasure to come across a first-class classical name, like the Fountain of Arethusa; and the Fountain of Arethusa even in its present debased condition is so eminently foreign-looking, Southern-looking. In Nelson's time it was quite a



ARETHUSA

THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA AS IT WAS IN NELSON'S DAY

From "Antichi Monumenti Siracusani," by Vincenzo Politi, 1856

river, leaping with immense force out of the natural rock, as if the latter had just been struck by Moses. From the old engraving published herewith it seems to have been outside the city wall. In a very famous letter addressed to the Hamiltons Nelson says:—

"July 22nd, 1798.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Thanks to your exertions, we have victualled and watered, and surely, watering at the Fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze, and be assured I will return either crowned with laurel or covered with cypress."

IN SICILY

And on the following day he writes to Sir William Hamilton from the *Vanguard*:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—The Fleet is unmoored, and the moment the wind comes off the land shall go out of this delightful harbour, where our present wants have been most amply supplied, and where every attention has been paid to us; but I have been tormented by no private orders being given to the Governor for our admission. I have only to hope that I shall still find the French Fleet, and be able to get at them; the event then will be in the hands of Providence, of whose goodness none can doubt. I beg my best respects to Lady Hamilton, and believe me ever your faithful

"HORATIO NELSON.

"*No frigates*, to which has been, and may again, be attributed the loss of the French Fleet."

But some guide-books say that an earthquake disturbed the waters and turned them salt eight hundred years before Nelson got there, while others incline to the opinion that the earthquake happened shortly after he had watered his fleet from the fountain. I have two ponderous Italian books about Sicily, but it is not easy to gather any opinion from either of them, because they are immensely long and have no index. And trying to get a fact out of an Italian book of travel is worse than looking for a needle in a bottle of hay, because one fact is made to do duty for pages of gush and theory. In George Sandys' *A Relation of a Journey Begun An; Dom; 1610. Fovre Bookes Containing a Description of the Turkish Empire of AEgypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote Parts of Italy and Ilands adioyning.*" we have:—

"Ortigia stands at the uttermost extent; an island joyned by a bridge to the rest. Wherein is the so chanted fountaine of Arethusa; once a nymph of Arcadia, (as they fable) beloued of the riuier Alpheus; and turned into a spring by Diana, for safeguard of her chastity; being conducted by her under seas and earth, and re-ascending in this island. Followed notwithstanding by her louer.

"Against Plemmyrium in Sicanian Bay,
There lies an ile, earst call'd Ortigia.
Hither Alpheus vnder seas (same goes)
From Elis straid; and at thy mouth arose
Lou'd Arethusa; from whence to seas he flowes.'—(VIR. *Æn.* i. 3.)

THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA

They so conjecturing, for that this fountaine was said to grow thicke, and fauour of garbage, at such time as they celebrated the Olympiads; and defiled the riuier with the blood and entrailes of the sacrifices. But Strabo derides the conceit, though (besides diuer more ancient authors) it be affirmed by Seneca, and others. The fountaine is ample, and sendeth to the adjoining sea a plentiful tribute. Before, and euen in the days of Diodorus the Sicilian, a number of sacred fishes were nourished herein; so said to be, for that whatsoeur did care of them (though in time of war) were afflicted with sundry calamities."

Almost the first thing anyone would notice about the Fountain of Arethusa nowadays is the splendid sea mullet which swim about in its presumably partly fresh waters, though I have always regarded them as being aristocratic rather than sacred. But I suppose they must be sacred, or the boys would have sneaked them long ago at night, or quite probably by day under the very eye of the *custode*. Anyhow, they are very large, and regard you with the same contemptuous indifference as a chub for which you are throwing a fly. Secure of their immunity also, they have a number of waggish habits; they will go into a shallow weedy part and lift half their backs out of the water, but they will always eat, even bread. Bread is not so plentiful in Syracuse as for them to be likely to get too much, except from the *forestieri*. They never jump, like the grey mullet you see in the Devonshire estuaries. I do not think I ever saw a mullet jump in the Mediterranean, though, judging from table d'hôte, you would not think there were any fish except mullet in the Mediterranean.

These particular mullet are separated from that part of the Mediterranean which is included in the Great Harbour of Syracuse by an iron grating, through which only a very small fish can pass. They are probably very select as to what small fish should be allowed to pass in. They may have a ceremony for it, like conferring the freedom of the city, and stowaways are probably killed and eaten; and yet, I suppose, sometimes a little mullet adventurer does force his way in, and chance being cannibalised for the remoter chance

IN SICILY

of being allowed to roll in luxury for the rest of his days in the clear waters of Arethusa. The Arethusa of to-day can be dowered with exquisite beauty by an unconscientious artist like Gaston Vuillier, whose *Sicilia* is the most beautifully illustrated modern work on the country; for it has all the attributes which the touch of genius can make a joy for ever—a clear pool with a current of rushing water swirling through it, bordered by a marble terrace decorated with



Photo by Crupi.

THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA AS IT IS TO-DAY

pedestals and vases of antique shape, and lined the half of it with brakes of papyrus, round whose roots the mullet sport, while the plaster is put on with the picturesque handiwork of the Southern races, and made yet more picturesque by decay, though it cannot have been built fifty years, since it is not shown in Vincenzo Politi's *Guide to the Antiquities of Syracuse*, published forty-two years ago. An old tree throws its shadow over the pool. It is interesting to note that Cicero mentions that the fountain was walled off from the sea and full of fish when he saw it, though it was void of fish and

THE TEMPLE OF DIANA

given over to washerwomen when Brydone saw it one hundred and fifty years ago.

According to Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology*, Alpheus was a passionate hunter, and fell in love with the nymph Arethusa, but she fled from him to the island of Ortygia, near Syracuse, and metamorphosed herself into a well, whereupon Alpheus became a river, which, flowing from the Peloponnesus under the sea to Ortygia, there united its waters with the well Arethusa. A cup thrown into the river in Elis would make its reappearance in the well at Syracuse. Another legend says that it was not the nymph, but Artemis (Diana), who was pursued by the river and hid herself in the mud of the spring. Probably all these legends point to two or three facts. There is a pool called the Fountain of Arethusa by the seashore at Syracuse. Into it, until the rock was built over, there

leaped from the bowels of the earth a subterranean river, with a good volume of water and a very rapid stream. That river may have supplied the legend of Alpheus, and very likely occasionally brought with it something that had fallen into its unknown source among the mountains inhabited by Sicanians. Communication between Sicily and Elis must have been very rare, so there was no earthly means of knowing if a thing came from there. Or the legend of Alpheus pursuing Arethusa may have arisen from the strong spring of



Photo by Leont.

THE TEMPLE OF DIANA

IN SICILY

fresh water which has at intervals burst up through the sea outside the pool. In connection with the legend that Alpheus pursued Artemis, it may be mentioned that there is at Syracuse, not very far from the fountain, an antique temple attributed to Artemis (Diana).

THE TERRACE ABOVE THE MARINA

Beyond the fountain, going towards the entrance of the harbour, rise the mediæval walls which, on the sea side, go down sheer into deep waters. They terminate in the point crowned by the Castle of Maniace. Above the Marina and the fountain rises a terrace of private palaces, and above that again rise the cathedral, and the huge mass of the Collegio, or Jesuit church, the biggest building in Syracuse, the convent attached to which is used for military purposes. The military watch is also, I believe, kept from the truncated cupola which crowns it. The view from the terrace is very fine, for you look across the deep blue waters of the great port*—too deep in places to be of any use for anchorage, generally as smooth as oil in the morning, and crisped by a breeze in the afternoon, at a panorama which embraces the long Wall of Dionysius, the Castle of Euryalus, the low mouth of the classical Anapo, the two columns of the temple of Olympian Jove, and further back the Hyblæan Hills and Etna. The bay itself will sometimes contain the monsters of the Italian war fleet, and at others nothing but coasting craft and barcas with gay rims, and eyes on their bows like Chinese junks (and at the season of the year brilliant awnings), propelled by oars or a spritted mainsail. The water life at Syracuse is, however, not a very interesting one, for the nautical ambitions of the inhabitants are confined to taking you over to the Anapo or the Malta steamer.

FROM THE MARINA TO THE PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

It is best then to retrace your steps and pass up through the noble Porta Marina into the street which runs between the Marina and the Piazza del Duomo—a characteristic Syracusan street with

* When Procopius, the soldier-historian, visited Syracuse in 533 A.D. on military business for his general, Belisarius, the Great Harbour was called *the Harbour of Arethusa* (Hodgkin's *Italy and Her Invaders*).

THE CATHEDRAL AND S. LUCIA

low-browed shops, and here and there a bit of old Gothic, for this by a sharp turn, called the Via Ruggiero Settimo, takes you up into the Piazza del Duomo. No. 297 in this street was the old prison of the town, and bears a very fine coat-of-arms. It is now the property of the Conte de la Torre, and has a subterranean dungeon still.

THE PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

I suppose the Piazza Archimede is really the heart of Syracuse—to the Syracusan—but to the traveller certainly the cathedral square is much more so, for on it stand the museum and the beautiful Renaissance Palazzo Bosco on one side of the street, and the cathedral, the archbishop's palace, and S. Lucia on the other. S. Lucia is to my mind the most exquisite legacy of the Renaissance in Sicily. It is so romantic, so lofty, so elegant; its soaring top is so light and delicate; its *grille* balcony is the very perfection of Syracusan iron-work. In its lightness and chaste graces S. Lucia reminds one of the bas-reliefs of Mino da Fiesole.

THE CATHEDRAL AN OLD GREEK TEMPLE

The cathedral hardly escapes being a monstrosity, but its Renaissance façade contrives to be solid instead of hideous, and its north side, which is really rather absurd, with its Greek colonnade half muffled up in a stucco wall, and crowned with ungainly Saracenic battlements, is actually highly picturesque. And though nine-tenths of the people who go to the Villa Politi go away without seeing it, while they rave over the Greek ruins on the mainland, it is really the most perfect Greek monument we have left from ancient Syracuse. It was saved in the same way as the Temple of Concord at Girgenti, by becoming a Christian church in 640 A.D. And most of it is saved. If an age of reason were to come in which they pulled down the façade and the battlements and other additions, and filled in the arches cut out of the walls of the cella, Syracuse would be found to possess a Greek temple much older and much more complete than the Parthenon itself.

IN SICILY

The cathedral at Syracuse is the oldest place of worship in the island, for it embodies a Greek temple built in the sixth century before Christ, which has been attributed without sufficient authority to Minerva. The piers are cut out of the cella, and twelve columns protrude from the cathedral wall on the north side. The corresponding columns on the south side form an aisle in the interior, and four of the six columns of the west front are visible from the interior. Nor is that the only trace of Pagan times, for the font consists of a magnificent ancient Greek marble mixing-bowl, supported by conical little antique bronze lions, with paws lifted to shake hands. Behind the font there is a fine marble doorway of the fifteenth century. The cathedral has rather a good coloured open-woodwork ceiling, and rich gilt coffered organ lofts on each side. The other features are not imposing. There are the ordinary variegated marbles, and most extraordinary altar rails of black and yellow marble. There is a poverty-stricken air about the place, as there is about all Syracusan churches, but the gates of the side-chapels are made of very fine hammered ironwork, and one chapel has superb bronze doors. The

cathedral is called S. Maria del Piliero, on account of its antique Greek pillars. It was famous for its splendour and wealth till the time of Verres, who carried off everything worth taking to Rome. The temple was 185 feet long by 75 feet wide (according to Murray).

THE MUSEUM

Almost opposite the cathedral is the museum, which contains the famous Venus Anadyomene, found at the Villa Landolina, and



Photo by Crupi.

HEAD OF MEDUSA IN THE MUSEUM

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY,
Schermerhorn Street Branch,
67 SCHERMERHORN STREET.

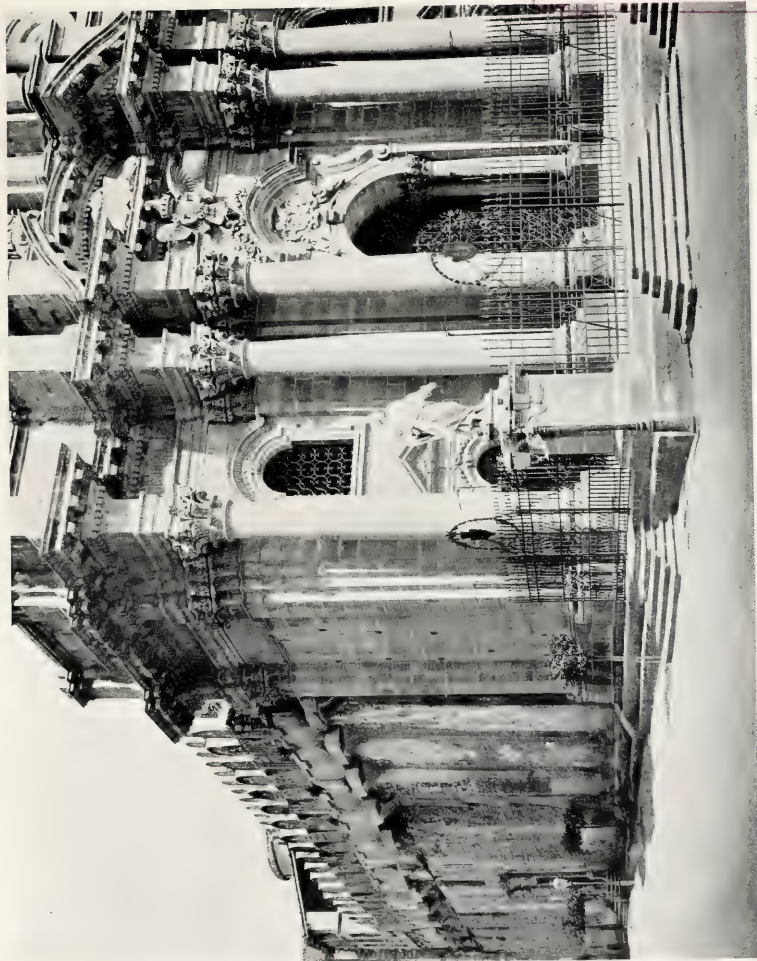


Photo by Sautter.

THE CATHEDRAL OF SARAGOSA, FORMERLY THE TEMPLE OF MINERVA

VIA TRIESTE, VIA NIZZA, VIA GELONE

a very fine head of Jove, besides quantities of valuable coins and pottery, especially the pottery of the aboriginal races who preceded the Greeks in Sicily. Witheridge was very much struck with the museum at Syracuse; it was the only museum where he had ever been able to induce the attendants to sell articles. He bought several things there. For more specific descriptions of this valuable museum I must refer readers to the guide-books.

THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE

The adjoining Archivescovado is, of course, enormous, about the size of the Foreign Office in Whitehall. The passage under the building on each side, garnished with columns taken from antique temples, conducts you into the courtyard, which contains a poor little garden with S. Lucia—S. Lucia is everything at Syracuse, where she was martyred—in the middle, surrounded by feeble orange trees, nespoli, palmettos, periwinkles, and roses. When you get inside it strikes you first of all that the palace is deserted, but you have not to stand there above a minute or two before the beggars begin to congregate. They always hang about the churches in Sicily, even if the rest of a town is tolerably free of them. These are licensed church beggars.

THE SIGHTS OF THE VIA TRIESTE, VIA NIZZA, AND VIA GELONE

You pass out through the back of the palace, and keeping in a general direction to the right you soon find yourself outside the Palazzo Bellomo and the church of S. Martino described above. The street which runs between them, which is called the Via Trieste in its principal portion, has at its next corner, where it joins the Via Roma, a little early Renaissance palace with a delightful exterior, the Palazzo Lantieri. The sculptures of its angle, from the pavement to the roof, are the most delicate and beautiful Renaissance carving in Syracuse. Parallel with the Via Trieste is the Via Nizza, one of the quaintest old streets in the city, which contains several fine kneeling balconies. Even more interesting is

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the Via Gelone, which contains the House of the Griffon, whose proper name is the Palazzo Padronaggio. This palace, with the broken sea-horses of its balcony and the broken griffon over the porch in the earlier Renaissance style, has many Gothic details, and its ground floor, with its antique twisted columns inside, is sufficiently ancient, forbidding, and mysterious to give you the creeps. So Stephana said. She had gone in to explore it with her customary audacity and came out again rather suddenly. The Via Gelone contains in its angle a picturesque macaroni-shop, and you may often see there, as on the sea-wall near the Hotel Politi, beside the bug-proof iron seats, the macaroni drying on sieves. A little way from the Palazzo Padronaggio is the Palazzo of the Cavaliere Landolina, which has a fine Gothic hood-moulding over the gateway, and good masonry with spirited Arab windows in the top story, though they are square below. There are various other Gothic bits in the Via Gelone, but the best street in Syracuse for them is the Via Dione.



*Phot. by
the Author.*

A MACARONI SHOP
WITH THE MACARONI DRYING



THE SIGHTS OF THE VIA DIONE AND THE VIA ROMA

No. 17, as far as I remember, has a few good Gothic features, a gallery, staircase, and well in the courtyard, and a good Sicilian-Gothic doorway. No. 8 has a Sicilian-Gothic window of good fifteenth-century masonry, and the next door to that is a fine old house, but its only notable feature is a good Renaissance balcony. It is called the Casa Specchi. The Via Roma has some of the best Spanish balconies. The Casa Platina, next to S. Spirito, with its ancient lion, has a fair Renaissance staircase. There

THE CASTLE OF MANIACE

is a charming vine-tendril iron bracket in this street. The Ghetto of Syracuse—the Giudecca—is really full of Jews, very prosperous, well-fed looking Jews, who seem to drive a thriving business in green-grocery. It contains many old bits. The Palazzo Bon Giovanni in the Via Mirabella has a rich Renaissance front, and the Palazzo Abela a very ancient arcade in its courtyard.

THE CASTLE OF MANIACE

The principal Gothic monument of Syracuse is, of course, the Castle of Maniace, built about the time of the Norman Conquest. It would be interesting to know how much of the building as it stands now was the handiwork of Maniace himself. When the commandant was showing me over the castle I saw none of the round arches which we call Norman and the Continental nations call Roman, or, more correctly, Romanesque. I saw only elegant pointed arches of what would in England mean fourteenth-century work, but here, of course, the style of the Norman architect was vastly modified by Byzantine and Saracen influences, except where he was building details, which he understood better than they did, such as crypts, and then we have the round Norman arches and plain capitals used rather late, just as we have Norman arcading outside the apse of the Church of the Vespers at Palermo.

The castle has a lovely black-and-white marble gate in the Arabo-Norman style, with strange beasts carved in its capitals. It was put up in 1038, to commemorate the defeat of the Saracens, and the two brackets are still left on which the antique bronze rams stood for more than eight hundred years until the Revolution of 1848, when one of them was destroyed and the other transferred for safety to the museum at Palermo. Over all shines the great white shield of the great Emperor Charles V.

Inside there are the remains of the church and the refectory. The church has a beautiful black-and-white Arabo-Norman doorway, with charming pilasters and capitals. The refectory has the remains of a very handsome chimney-piece and a single column with a magnificent capital. The castle courtyard is overgrown with sheets of little puce-

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coloured wild stocks. The castle is surrounded by deep water on every side except the entrance. Nelson laid his fleet alongside of it in 1798, when the Governor refused to allow him to come in and water. Its builder was Georgio Maniace, the Byzantine general who defeated the Arabs and reconquered Syracuse.

WE ARE SHOWN OVER BY THE COMMANDANT

We saw the Castle of Maniace so well that I am not able to describe it. The soldier who had been showing us over the outer courts, which he said were the only parts strangers were admitted to see, was endeavouring to hurry us on from examining one of the Arabo-Norman windows, when the Colonel Commandant came by. With the keen eye of an Italian officer for such matters, he took in at a glance Stephana's beauty and the social status of her clothes, and, giving her a little military salute, inquired of me what we wished to see. I said we wished to see everything, and that we would promise not to sell the secrets of the fortress to the Germans. He laughed, and said that it had only been a barrack since the Revolution, and gallantly volunteered to take us over himself. He said he could talk French as well as Italian. But none of us could understand his French as well as we understood Italian, which is a much more distinct language to catch. He took so much trouble to show us everything that Stephana felt that she ought to say something nice about Syracuse, which was his native place. "You have no malaria here," she said. "Certainly not, signorina, only typhus." He probably meant typhoid, but he went on to say, "And that is of no consequence; only the poor people take it." Stephana was inexpressibly shocked; she did not recognise that all he was trying to convey was that there was nothing to prevent her coming to Syracuse in the summer.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ROTONDO

SHOPPING IN THE ROTONDO AND GUIDE-BOOK INFORMATION

I DO not consider that there is anything for which Stephana owed me a greater debt of gratitude than for introducing her to the delights of the Rotondo. In fact, there are not many places in the world like the Rotondo of Syracuse, which is, more strictly speaking, an oval, for it is here that the country meets the town on such very intimate terms. It is outside the *octroi*, and man and beast may refresh themselves with untaxed plenty—generally at the same shops.

A SHOP FOR MAN AND BEAST

To one shop that I have in my mind you could hardly force your way for the tall sheaves of juicy green forage, resting against each other like the gabions of a fortress. These and a black pig lying on his side, with his legs stretched out and his snout pillowed in the dust, the very picture of *dolce far niente*, formed the outer line of defence. Inside them were files of tall pitchers of the



Photo by

(“Mr. Witheridge.”

THE LONG-LEGGED, LONG-HAIRED PIGS OF SICILY

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roughest earthenware and the most classic grace, some of them unglazed and as porous as a blanket, and others with their shiny sides decorated with brown, green, and yellow designs conventionalised from the papyrus so interwoven with Syracusan life. The family goats were with them, though doubtless they would much rather have been with the forage.



THE DIOTĒ (TWO-EARED WINE-JARS) OF HORACE

From the Author's collection of the peasants' pottery of Syracuse.

THE SHOP WHERE WE WENT TO BUY POTTERY

Then came the shop itself, a low-browed *basso*. Its doors, flung wide as they were, were unable to illumine its black depths, in which glowed huge casks with whitened ends painted with saints and labelled "Si vende vino." There were bread also, and oil and strings of dried tomatoes, and various nastinesses consumed by Sicilians. Here you might buy food and probably water for your mule, and bread and wine and oil for yourselves, and oil jars and wine jars for carrying the fluid away in, if you had not brought them, as of course you would—a Sicilian does not lightly buy new earthenware. When it breaks he has it riveted with lead, if it has only cost a penny. I never bought wine or oil in that shop, but I daresay the wine was good enough, though as rough as the earthenware. One day, however, I took Stephana and Witheridge there to buy wine jars and oil jars, and earthenware tankards of the queerest shapes imaginable.

MURILLO-LIKE WOMEN

I saw from the moment we started that Witheridge had no appetite for the job. He always thought of fleas when he went into Syracusan shops, not unjustly. Most shops, like this, had live fowls in them, in crates or out. He had an unaffected contempt for Sicilian pauper life, and hardly even looked at the two-wheeled yellow cart with nine women like Murillo's Madonnas which we met on the road where the railway embankment was one vast Beard of Jove, adorned with rich crimson blossoms. Witheridge simply re-

THE SIGHTS OF THE ROTONDO

garded it as the railway embankment — mesembryanthemum or no mesembryanthemum, *barba di Giove* or no *barba di Giove*. He noticed it as little as the gorgeous headkerchiefs and shawls of the nine Madonnas. When we came to where the women were washing in the ditch, which runs where the market-place of what was once the wealthiest city in the world has its tombstones in the shape of a couple of columns, he did relax a little. He thought it "so jolly funny" that the women with their dresses turned up round their waists should be doing their washing in a ditch. But they did not interest him, and he probably did not even notice the patient babies slung from the trees with the family mules watching them till it was time for all hands and the washing to voyage home on their long-eared friends.

THE SIGHTS OF THE ROTONDO

As we neared the Rotondo I pointed out to Stephana a half-circle of picturesque stone benches, with arms and backs like those in the Borghese Gardens. She was charmed with their romantic grace. Witheridge thought them out of repair. As Stephana had no hopes of converting him, she put herself to no trouble about him; she simply gave herself up to us for the afternoon — American women get so little amusing bargaining at home, and there are no truer daughters of Eve. As we drove into the Rotondo in the chaise tinkered up with sheet brass, drawn by the old white moke whose pheasant plumes nodded so ridiculously as he jogged along, we found our way blocked by a string of the two-wheeled yellow carts, loaded like waggons. A detachment of *carabinieri*, glorious with cocked hats and sabres, marching most martially; and a company of infantry, with their long bluey-grey great-coats buttoned back behind their legs, and their heads and feet lost in shakos and spats, were passing. The infantry had been out manœuvring for hours, and were so dog-tired that they looked shambling even beside a priest's school of unfortunate boys in black cassocks and beaver birettas, who were coming in along the same road. In fact, everybody, man and beast, looked shambling and dejected, except the brisk, martial policemen in their blue and red *carabinieri* uniforms, and Stephana, who had just dismounted from the

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vettura, and carried her graceful, well-groomed figure with the innocent assurance of the American maiden. Everyone in the Rotondo turned round to look at us. Hair as golden and cheeks as rosy are not common in Sicily. It looked like universal homage to her beauty, but it was quite as likely the result of the unusual privilege of seeing three Anglo-Saxons in their midst, walking. Plenty are driven through in Madame Politi's omnibus on the way to and from the station, but it is not often that Anglo-Saxons descend from their vehicles to be examined at leisure in the Rotondo.

SHOPPING AT THE ROTONDO

"Say, what are you staring at?" cried Witheridge when their curiosity became a burden. "Haven't you ever seen anyone better-looking than yourselves before?"

"Oh, Ralph!" said Stephana, in smiling rebuke, "how can you?"

"That's the shop, Miss Heriot."

"Oh, you dear pig! Quick, Ralph! kodak, or he will have moved."

"I don't think there is any risk of that," I said; "vegetables move almost as fast as men and animals in Sicily."

Ralph took several kodaks of the pig; money was of no more object to him than time. Kodaking the pig, waked into increasing exertions by judiciously administered kicks, occupied some of the time he would have spent with us in the shop. There were three dear old women, in their black silk *mantos*, filling up nearly the whole available space. What they were buying was not apparent; they might not



Photoby the Author.
A GREENGROCERY SHOP IN THE ROTONDO

SHOPPING IN THE ROTONDO

have been buying anything. In Sicily, like Japan, a shop is often more a place where its proprietor lives than where he sells. In any case, buying on their own account did not present half the attractions offered to the native mind by buying for us. Sicilians love to help foreigners buy things. A foreigner in a shop is their Earl's Court Exhibition. Our cabman was already treading on our heels, in his anxiety to take part in the deal. The white moke was not the kind of horse to run away. Sicilian horses do not run away; it is difficult to get them to run at all. I had not been in the shop for two years, but the woman recognised me as the *forestiere* who had bought jars from her, and inquired at once where the other two ladies and the two boys were. She knew I should buy something, so was not in the least hurry to begin actual transactions. It was a great thing for the humble Sicilian to have foreigners in her shop, especially foreign ladies; it formed a better show for the neighbourhood than a marionette theatre, where the figures have tin armour and faces like King Roger or Saladin. We, on the other hand, wished to inhale as few smells and fleas as possible while raking over her entire stock of jars.

THE POTTERY OF SYRACUSE

The Syracusan pottery is good for nothing except to look at; it breaks like pie-crust, and will not hold water without letting half of it through, and not infrequently when it is wet it smells horrid. But there is no gainsaying its decorativeness. The dull grey of the



THE POTTERY OF SYRACUSE

From the Author's collection of the peasants' pottery of Syracuse

- A. Pitcher. B. The Horatian Diota (two-eared wine-jar). C. Little pitcher. D. Flat-bellied wine-jar for carrying in a sling. E. Pizzipapers. F. Greek lekuthion, the little oil-jar of Aristophanes

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ware makes a delightful background for the orange, green, and brown slashed on it with such a bold grasp of effect; and the shapes have been handed down, hardly demoralised, from the days of Dionysius. Most of the jars, whether wider-necked for wine or nozzled for oil, are *diotæ*, with the tops of their two ears flush with the top of the neck. The wine pitchers naturally have freer and more graceful shapes than the oil flasks; the one is meant to pour, the other to drop. The most curious of all their earthenware vessels are the great tankards with spouts bashed in like a prize-fighter's nose, in a way more aggravated than even a Neapolitan *pizzipapero*.

"Now, Miss Heriot, if you'll choose the jars you want, I'll make the bargain for them."

The first she chose was a two-eared water bottle, flattened on one side. Except that it had two ears instead of a handle it was very like an old-fashioned watch, flat on one side and turnipy on the other.

THE BARGAIN BEGINS

"How much?" I asked.

"Ten soldi."

"Four soldi."

I saw from the faces of the old ladies in *mantos* that this was the outside price.

"It is a three soldi bottle," said one of them at the moment that the cabman was asserting that five soldi was the price.

I said, "I have offered you four soldi; if that is not the price I shall not take any of these things. We will go to the other shop."

How was the *padrona* to know that I hated the man at the other shop and would rather submit to her overcharges than his? But instinct told her that it was not worth while to bring the whole deal to an end by a serious overcharge on the first article.

"Si, signor, four soldi, twenty centesimi."

This was to show me that she was no mere villager, but a woman of the world, who could count either in halfpence or centesimi. I was glad; I always think in centesimi, not soldi, and have to do a sum if the vendor can only reckon in halfpence.

BARGAINING AT THE ROTONDO

"These little oil jars are not so pretty as you had last time," I said. The cabman climbed the ladder through the low wooden roof, which rested like a shelf on the rafters, and brought down some more without a word of instruction from the *padrona*. He was evidently an intimate; I determined not to trust him on the question of prices. The three old women as evidently meant to see us through. Without any expense to themselves they were going to do more bargaining over crockery than usually fell to their lot in a year. They were proportionately excited, and forgot to side with the *padrona*; possibly they thought that bargaining for her against us would not yield them so much amusement. In everything except in giving an enemy the chance of his life, the Sicilian is of a very sporting disposition.

A WOMAN INTERVENES

"Don't bargain with her," said Stephana, who was pitiful as well as rich and careless about money. "I daresay she is very poor."

"Not so very," I answered, "according to her own ideas. She is the principal trader of this part of Syracuse, and doesn't consider herself at all a subject to be pitied. Besides, if I don't bargain I shall have to make an excuse and leave you, or I shall have to sacrifice one of two principles—I shall either have to make her understand that I am conniving with her in cheating you, because you are careless about money, or establish a precedent that foreigners are to be charged treble the price, neither of which I am willing to do."

"No, no!" she cried, seizing me by the arm, "don't leave me; I will be good, I'll promise anything, I am enjoying every minute of it; I should like to go on for hours. It is one of the quaintest experiences I ever had in my life, with these three old ladies and the cabman helping to serve the shop, and those devilish things to eat. They look as if they were going to sting you in the gloom, and really it is very funny to have fowls hopping about."

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THE REVOLT OF WITHERIDGE

"I wish it was only fowls!" cried Witheridge, who had followed us into the shop as soon as the departure of the cabman had left him unprotected from the curiosity of the people who were doing nothing. Most of the people who do nothing in Sicily only do nothing because no one will pay them to do anything. But Sicilians are such a dignified race that anyone who is doing nothing is a man of leisure, whether the cause of his doing nothing is that he has an income of a franc a minute or because he cannot get anyone to employ him at a franc a day. The Sicilians are like the Japanese; they will jog along at their work all day long if they have any, but if they have none they will stand about in one of the liveliest places in their town and see life. Witheridge was *life* for the time being in the Rotondo of Syracuse, though he looked anything but lively.

"I am sure we shall get typhoid from this beastly hole," was a fair sample of the liveliness of his conversation at the moment. As for the jars he would like to have filled sacks with them, and dropped them over the ramparts on to the rocks to hear the compound fracture.

STEPHANA'S PURCHASES

In the end Stephana bought one wine jar that held three or four gallons, which I got for one franc instead of three, because it was cracked. I convinced her that the cracks did not signify in things which leaked like a straining-cloth. She bought this jar, three or four *pizzipaperi*, which held about half a gallon apiece, and a couple of dozen wine and oil and honey jars, and water bottles for slinging, and charmingly painted saucers that looked like soap dishes without their strainers. The beauty of the shapes, the artistic note of their colouring were ravishing, and they were so classical that they might have belonged to one of the Athenian prisoners, who had won a tardy freedom, and set up a humble home in Syracuse. The whole lot did not cost her ten paper francs.

Witheridge throughout the whole of the proceedings stood with

SYRACUSE GUIDE-BOOKS

averted eyes and a profile as rigid as a pointer's tail when he smells partridges. Stephana expected the cabman to take her exhibits back to the hotel with very bad grace, since he had been against us in the bargaining. She misunderstood the Sicilian character. There is nothing small about him except his wages; even as a blackguard he is wholesale, and poverty does not affect his dignity.

The shops, such as they are, only line one side of the oval of the Rotondo, which on a sunny day is a furnace. It is then that the value of the *basso* as a residence appears. The stucco walls of these food and pottery shops look as if they had been put there like raw bricks to be baked, but in the centre of each is a cool cavern—the *basso*.

SYRACUSE GUIDE

The guide-book information about Syracuse can be given in a very few words. The sights have already been dealt with. The only hotels English people go to are the Hotel Politi on the sea-front, near the end of the Via Roma, in the city, and the Villa Politi, about a mile out, adjoining the fine ancient convent of the Cappuccini and enclosing in its lovely garden one of the most beautiful gorges in the world, the Latomia dei Cappuccini, in which the Athenian captives were imprisoned. The views from the Villa Politi are wonderful, whether you look down into the Latomia, or at Etna, or at the old convent, or at the city of Syracuse, rising from the further side of the small harbour. Travellers from the East who leave their ships at Malta and cross to Syracuse by the fast Austrian mailboats are always to be met at the Villa Politi, which charges Cook's prices. Most of these overland passengers take the train from Syracuse to Palermo and the night boat on to Naples, much the preferable way, as they save a whole day's land journey. There is no bank at Syracuse which will negotiate English letters of credit or circular notes, but Madame Politi acts as banker where people can be trusted.

The nominal price of one-horse cabs is fifty centesimi a drive, one franc fifty an hour, or five francs a half-day. A boat to or from the steamers costs fifty centesimi for each person. The only guide

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worth having is a good cabman, and except in the city itself distances are so great that you need a cab in any case.

People who begin their Sicilian tour at Taormina generally proceed from Taormina to Syracuse, and Syracuse to Girgenti. Stephana had asked, with trepidation, as though it were the greatest favour in the world, if she and Witheridge might accompany us as far as Girgenti. It seemed a pity not to see the Temples of Girgenti.

You leave Syracuse at 10.18 a.m., change at Bicocca outside Catania and at S. Caterina Xirbi, and arrive at Girgenti at 8.10 p.m. That is the only possible train for civilised people. The journey is interesting as taking you right through the sulphur country of the mountainous interior of Sicily. For many miles you get beautiful views of the rifted mountain crowned with the ancient city and castle of Castrogiovanni, and you pass the famous fields of Enna, where Pluto fell in love with Proserpine.

PART III.

A.

CASTROGIOVANNI

THE ENNA OF CERES AND PROSERPINE

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BRIGANDS OF CASTROGIOVANNI

CASTROGIOVANNI IS PROSERPINE'S ENNA

IN going from Girgenti or Palermo to Syracuse, one passes the famous Fields of Enna, where Pluto is supposed to have appeared to Proserpine, issuing through one of the numerous sulphur caverns which abound in the interior of Sicily. Sulphur is the principal industry of the interior. Every railway station has its pile of brilliant yellow sulphur ingots awaiting transhipment. I cannot vouch for the truth of the rape of Proserpine, nor for the fact of there being a hundred-headed narcissus on the Fields of Enna, but I have seen one with at least twenty heads growing wild near the railway line. This is one of the most interesting parts of Sicily, though unfortunately not very safe as regards brigands; for it was in this rocky, wild, and desolate interior of Sicily that the ancient tribes of the island maintained themselves, while the rich cities of the coast were built by, or fell into the hands of Phœnician and Greek invaders. Here, too, was the chief seat of the worship of Ceres, the corn goddess, the greatest deity of ancient Sicily, which was the granary of Europe. The Fields of Enna lie under the picturesque mediæval town of Castrogiovanni, topped by the great castle built by Frederick II. of Aragon.

Castrogiovanni is a garrison town, which is not surprising, for it is in the very centre of the island, and stands upon a mountain 3,270 feet above the sea, surrounded on all sides by precipitous cliffs, from which gushes abundance of good water. The view from Castrogiovanni is a most remarkable one, for it is surrounded by a sea

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of conical hills, and most of them are crowned with the ruins of mediæval fortresses.

HOW WE GOT TO CASTROGIOVANNI

It had often been our intention in previous years to visit Castrogiovanni. Its very name had exercised a spell over us, for Castrogiovanni has nothing to do with the hardworked Baptist and Evangelist, but is an Italianisation of the old Arabic name of this impregnable city, Casr-janni—the Castle of Enna. Castrogiovanni is Enna—Enna, the Sikel city set on a hill—in whose subject valleys Proserpine went agathering daffodils and was carried off by Pluto. But the fields of Enna have an ill repute to-day, both for malaria and brigands, and in 1896 we did not screw our courage to the sticking-point. But when Stephana was with us she was so anxious to see the sacred city, brigands or no brigands, that we were shamed into making the attempt. I did, it is true, pay a surreptitious visit to the foreign gentleman who acts as British Vice-Consul in Syracuse mostly from his bed, poor man!—and, from an interchange of messages, gathered that between the station and the town there was no risk of capture, though it was not advisable to make any excursions. As a result we started off at ten o'clock on a Sunday morning, and arrived at Castrogiovanni station at twenty-five past three. We had telegraphed for a *grande carrozza*. The vehicle

which responded was an ancient wooden ark, with "Regie Poste" painted—the solitary piece of paint it boasted—on its panels, and three lean, strong, scabby mountain mules to draw it. It had three places outside and four in.

We began to see Castrogiovanni long before we were quit of the plain of Catania, and it accompanied us at intervals for the rest of our journey. For the mountain on which



Photo by the Authors.

THE "REGIE POSTE" ROYAL MAIL

THE BRIGANDS

it is built tops the highest mountain in England, and its summit is extensive enough to accommodate a town of fifteen to twenty thousand inhabitants. When we left the train our first reverse began. Our baggage receipt bore "No. 96"; the official took out the batch No. 95, which belonged to some Americans who had gone on to Girgenti, so we had to go to Castrogiovanni with our hand packages only. On the platform we were met by a splendid Montese, fair-haired, blue-eyed, six feet high, arrayed in brown velvet garments and yellow top-boots—unadulterated Sicilians always wear top-boots. He had likewise a splendid hooded cloak of fine dark blue cloth, and Stephana's heart succumbed at once. Once outside the station we realised with Freeman that there are exceptions to the biblical axiom that a city set on a hill cannot be hid. There was not a sign of Castrogiovanni. We were only, for the nonce, too much under it. But it is often enveloped in mist.

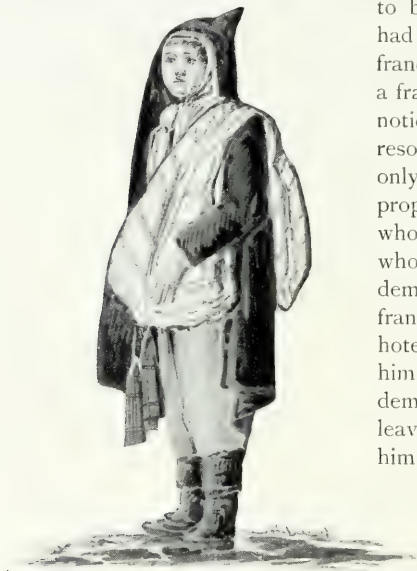
THE BRIGANDS OF CASTROGIOVANNI

Any idea of armed brigands we had was soon dispelled, but the precautions of the Government argued a necessity. There is a barrack, garrisoned with a company and a half of infantry, constructed at a cleverly chosen point, which commands almost every inch of the triangle, whose points are the twin cities of Castrogiovanni and Calascibetta and their mutual railway station. A sentinel always faces each point of the compass, the rifle of one or other of them commands every approach. The mules walked up the hill to the city, and took an hour or more over it. It was a mighty change from Syracuse to have a light flurry of snow blowing in our faces—it, moreover, obscured the view.

We walked up the hill, because Stephana imagined that even her light weight must be a burden to the leathery mules. When, however, we reached the city gate, the driver insisted on our remounting. He had no idea of bringing five foreigners into the city without a proper flourish of the everlasting Sicilian whip, so we rattled in fine style past an old palace, with beautiful, ruinous, Gothic windows, to our *locanda*, which was situated in the noble

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Renaissance convent of S. Marco. We were at once surrounded by a swarm of beggars, in cowl'd cloaks, who wished to carry our parcels in, but only five of them were of a nature to permit it. No sooner was the luggage deposited on the brick floors of our cells than we began our experiences of the brigands of Castrogiovanni. Wishing



A MONTESE

From a water-colours painting by Salvatore Politi

to be liberal, I threw the men who had carried up five small parcels a franc between them; they demanded a franc each, but of course I took no notice of them beyond registering a resolve to give them fifty centesimi only when I went away. Then the proprietor of the carriage, the Montese who had captured Stephana's heart, whose real fare was nine francs fifty, demanded twenty francs, and two francs extra for the driver, but the hotel-keeper said I was not to give him more than ten francs. He then demanded twelve, because ten would leave him no profit. I finally gave him eleven, and two for the driver,

and he, like the porters, went away muttering. Then it was the turn of the hotel-keeper. In asking for the rooms, I had requested him to name the price. He had replied that he

would make a satisfactory arrangement when we arrived. His satisfactory arrangement, I found, was to charge two francs fifty each for the beds, and to serve the meals *à la carte*, charging for each dish what it cost, *with a small profit*. I said this would not do, that he must quote a price for the meals as well as the rooms. He said, "Well, what would you like? Soup, fish, macaroni, meat, fowl, vegetables, very good butter, cheese, fruit; would that do?" I said yes, that would do

MAKING OUR BARGAIN AT THE HOTEL

very well; but how much was he going to charge? He said he did not know; he would just get the things and charge us what they cost, *with a small profit*. I said no; we would not stay unless he named a price. Then his wife chimed in. I could trust them because they were Piedmontese. This struck me as being as funny as the protestations of the man, who had been keeping an inn twenty-two years, that he could not give a fixed price for a meal. Finally, the wife saw that was I in earnest, and agreed, after demanding much more, to the following tariff: bed and candle, 2'70; dinner, 2'50; lunch, 1'50; coffee and roll in the morning, 80. Then she tried a new tack. What did I imagine she would be able to give us for this? I said she was to give us what she could, without injustice to herself, and I should tell the other English people whether her hotel was managed liberally or otherwise.

Though we were out of the train at twenty-five minutes past three, it was getting on for six when we escaped from her clutches to have a ramble round the town before dinner.

THE PEOPLE, THE CHURCHES, AND THE PALACES

Even Stephana's stout heart had sunk within her as she surveyed the bare brick floors, the fleaeey-looking mats, and the unmade beds of our convent cells. But it revived immediately we got outside, when she saw groups of tall, straight Montesi in their splendid blue hooded-cloaks and yellow riding-boots. Top-boots are universal among country Sicilians, because riding is universal. No Sicilian peasant is poor enough to walk to his work; he inherits an aged mule or donkey, which feeds itself while he is working. Not only had we that old palace at our very doors, but just round the corner one of the thirty-six churches of Castrogiovanni—S. Giovanni, with its tower of rich Sicilian-Gothic. Other churches and convents followed each other in quick succession as we went up the main street—S. Benedetto; S. Chiara, with its light, lofty, elegant Renaissance front, each a nun's convent, or, as they say in Sicily, a *badia*, to be known by the gilded grills of its kneeling-balconies; and little S. Michele with another charming Renaissance front.

IN SICILY

Every man we met—and in Castrogiovanni you meet no women—wore his capote and top-boots. Even the priests were no exception, though their capotes and boots were black. One very fine priest, in a very fine capote, was good-natured enough to allow Stephana to photograph him in this novel costume—a new version of the legend of S. Anthony.

Abreast of S. Chiara a lofty gateway admitted to the courtyard of one of the most paintable palaces in Sicily. Its courtyard apart, it was rather in the Venetian style, both in its shape and the disposition of its exquisite square-headed Sicilian-Gothic windows. One side of the courtyard, too, was occupied with a sweeping terrace staircase, and another with a well and mounting-stone. Close by was the cathedral, not remarkable, except for the not very fine fourteenth-century exterior of its apse, its old gilt



Photographed by

[the Author.]

SICILIAN-GOTHIC PALACE OUTSIDE S. CHIARA

Spanish organ loft, and its seventeenth-century marble pulpit, described anon.

MANFRED'S CASTLE AND THE ROCK OF CERES

It was too dark to see it then, and Stephana had other fish to fry. Her mind was filled with the glowing pictures, drawn by Freeman, of the culminating rock of Castrogiovanni, whence Ceres looked down from her temple on those flowery fields of Enna which cost her her child. So we hurried on, and soon a cry of delight, a transatlantic cry of delight, burst from her lips, as we were confronted by the retreating towers of Manfred's noble castle. We had, of course, long before this, been joined by a small army of

CERES AND CICERO AT ENNA

would-be guides and a Norwegian tourist, and the guides were, *more Siciliano*, bent on taking us to the furthest point of the city—the Rocca di Cerere, as they call it.

They led us to the right of Manfred's castle. We had on our left Calascibetta hanging round its mountain-top and the snowy outline of the Madonian Hills, and on our right the fields of Enna and the sacred waters of Pergusa, while in front of us was the huge square mass of snow-white rock, climbed by an ancient stairway, once crowned by the temple of the earth-goddess, and on this clear spring evening haloed by the majestic mass of Etna. Such a view was worth a good deal of trouble and hardship.

THE CULT OF CERES AND CICERO'S ACCOUNT OF CASTROGIOVANNI

I shall not enter into detail on the subject of the ancient worship which took its rise from the volcanic waters of Lake Pergusa. It was natural that a primitive race like the Sikels, addicted to primitive gods, should imagine some divine agency in such a heaving, sulphurous, cavernous spot. As early as the seventh century before Christ the Syracusans established an outpost on the rock of Enna, and, Greek-like, started to Hellenise the mythology of the district. The Sikel goddess became the Greek Demeter, the Earth-Mother, and the city of the rifted hill the headquarters of her cult in Sicily, and of that of Kore, her maiden daughter. This was ordinary enough, but the later development of the cult was sufficiently extraordinary. The early Christian missionaries boldly identified Demeter and Kore—Ceres and Proserpine—with the Virgin Mary and her Son. There is even, in the museum at Castrogiovanni, a bronze statue which one part of the inhabitants recognise as Ceres and the baby Proserpine, and the other part as the Virgin and the Infant Jesus. As the figure in question has a hole in the top of its head, it may be assumed to have had a halo which would settle the question, unless the statue too underwent adaptation.

There are many charming legends in connection with the worship of Ceres at Enna; I prefer to call her by the beautiful and familiar

IN SICILY

Roman name under which she is yet known to the natives. A many-headed daffodil still flourishes on the slopes of her mountain, but the Lake of Pergusa is no longer, as Diodorus described it, surrounded by groves and such masses of fragrant flowers that dogs a-hunting lost the scent. Cicero, in his famous indictment of Verres, called this city *umbilicus*—the navel of Sicily. A stone, a few yards from the site once occupied by the temple of the Daughter, and now by a little monastery of sternly reformed Franciscans, marks the actual centre of the island.

THE SITE OF THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE VIRGIN MARY

Too much credence cannot be given to local tradition in Castrogiovanni, which, in its ruinous little church of the Holy Spirit, is confident that it possesses the tiles upon which the Virgin Mary knelt when she received the Annunciation, and the little stone fire-box at which she did her cooking. Why she should have been at Castrogiovanni on that important occasion is not to be explained on any other basis than the confusion between her and Ceres. The Greek gods were very human in some respects, but we do not hear of them cooking, though perhaps the Sikel gods of Pergusa and Pales were human even to this extent.

THE LAND OF CERES

Once Ceres, from her rock, could see not only groves round Pergusa, but miles and miles of rich cornfields rolling in billows with every breeze over the sea of mountains which stretched from her feet to the actual seas north, south, and east. No such other site could have been found for the temple of a corn-goddess. The sea of mountains is of course there to-day, unaltered in its large outlines by the elemental Powers of many centuries. But the smiling cornfields have given way to infrequent patches of beans and groves of olive and almond, which latter, for a few days in spring, give sheets of pink blossom not to be rivalled even in Japan. The land of Ceres is now the land of inhospitable mountains, which once seen are never to be forgotten, especially if they are seen in company with brigands.

GOETHE AT CASTROGIOVANNI

GOETHE AT CASTROGIOVANNI

Our first night at Castrogiovanni was sufficiently trying. Fleas simply blustered in the bedrooms, and the dinner, for which the proprietor wished to charge *d la carte*, would have been dear at fr. 1.50 a head, with its goatly wine. It was, however, thoroughly Sicilian. The little child of the proprietor came in to receive a present from the captain of the *carabinieri* who petted it like a puppy. The principal inn in a minor Sicilian city is always a kind of club at which the commandant of the garrison or the captain of the local *carabinieri* is the principal personage. The food was good enough, but extremely plain and limited. We soon beat a retreat to our cheerless but not lonely bedchambers, confident that our house was the same as had called down the ire of Goethe, and made him register a vow never to visit another mythological city.

S. CHIARA AND S. MICHELE

In the morning we sallied out with all the juvenile population to make a giro of the city. We soon discovered that the speciality of Castrogiovanni church interiors is to have absurd pictures worked in tiles on the floor. At S. Chiara, the church of a former Franciscan nunnery, the subjects are a mosque struck by lightning and a steamer of sixty years ago; but there is a very fine crucifix in the second chapel on the left, and the gilt and silvered grills of the nun's kneeling-galleries lend an artistic finish.

At S. Michele, the next church, the old Spanish arabesqued tiles are quite fine, and in the middle the tile-picture of S. Michele, threatening the devil with a baton in his left hand and keeping an eagle quiet with a sprig of olive in his right, is sufficiently comical. The church is shaped like a lemon, with an apse at the east end, and has a queer little organ, besides more grills. The churches of Castrogiovanni do not have the leather door-curtains, used for collecting microbes in other parts of Sicily; they have doors painted bright green instead.

IN SICILY

THE CATHEDRAL OF CASTROGIOVANNI

The cathedral is singularly uninteresting for such a town.

Apart from a very moderate apse-exterior in the Sicilian-Gothic style there is nothing early about it. It has a coffered ceiling richly carved, but not interesting, and gilt organ-lofts like those of Syracuse, but not so good. The most notable thing is the marble pulpit, of, I suppose, the seventeenth century, standing on a pedestal with six sculptured faces, which supports six rather fine, full-breasted angels in the mermaid style. These serve as brackets. The carving and inlaying of the marble pulpit and the balustrade of its stairs are good. It is a very fine pulpit of its period, though its effect is rather marred by having a sounding-board which is a shocking imitation of its marbles in wood and plaster. The sacristy has some good carved oak *armoires* of the year 1735, but much its most interesting feature is its armoury of a repeating rifle, a musket, and a double-barrelled gun to guard it from the attacks of brigands, who have always formed an element in the calculations of Castrogiovanni.

The sacristy seemed a house of call for all people. There were singing-men in black cassocks, white lace jackets, and red capes, mostly with their ordinary hats on, and priests in top-boots, lolling about and chatting as actors do in the wings; and the poor, and the street children, strolled in as they pleased; and all of them tried to explain things to us.

THE MUSEUM OF CASTROGIOVANNI

The huge silver altar-front of 1768, which represents the interior of a church (a baldachin surrounded by tabernacles) has been removed to the little municipal museum, which contains also a very interesting marble relief of the Crucifixion, some engraved gems, some seals and coins, and a few stuffed animals and Roman remains. The street urchins accompanied us into the museum and pulled the cover off the silver altar-front, which was perhaps three yards long by a yard high, for our inspection. No one interfered with them; in fact, the museum was so very open that it was left to take care of itself.

LA ROCCA

There was really nothing to detain us long in either the cathedral or the museum, so we determined, as it was snowing—snowing in Sicily!—and therefore impossible to take a photograph of the Rock of Ceres, to hurry off to the other peak of the rifted hill and take in the sights on the way.

The Piazza Lincoln, the busiest square of the city, named during the Garibaldian frenzy, was full of superb Montesi, standing like so many conspirators in their cloaks and discussing, who every now and then would have to step aside while a train of half a dozen pack mules, with the most gorgeous embroidered scarlet harness, especially as regards their tail quarters, marched across the square.

There are two roads up to Castrogiovanni—one a series of very long zigzags at very easy gradients, and the other the ancient, tortuous, torrent-eaten track by which the Syracusan invaders came to conquer the Sikels, and the Romans to conquer the Greeks, and the Saracens and Normans in their turn. This is the mules' track to-day.



Photo by the Author.

MONTESE (MOUNTAINEERS) OF CASTROGIOVANNI

FREDERICK II.'S CASTLE AND S. MARIA DEL POPOLO

We did not find as many Gothic remains as we expected in our progress through the town, but as we drew near the other peak of the mountain there was much to interest and delight us. In front, on our left, rose La Rocca, the huge, ancient tower of the Castle built by Frederick the Second of Aragon, which has two very interesting windows recalling some of the work in the Castel Nuovo at Naples. We could not see over it; it was kept locked because robbers—probably a delicate way of expressing brigands—used to lie in wait in it. The outer wall of this castle is a mere shell.

IN SICILY

Below it, on the right, is S. Maria del Popolo; above it, in the background, is Monte Salvo. S. Maria del Popolo is a church of the people; a great fair takes place here on the 13th and 14th of September; and all the poor women in Castrogiovanni do their washing in the very elaborate washing-pools below, which are the most ambitious, municipally speaking, in Sicily. Rock tombs abound on the slopes of the mountain where this little church is built, and there is a Roman arcade outside its rather picturesque courtyard on a rocky plateau commanding a view of Villarosa and the mountains behind. The church was built like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, to cover a sacred spot, the sacred spot in question being the rock with a fresco of the Crucifixion on it, discovered in the Middle Ages. A brief examination of the painting shows that it must have been painted with a view to the discovery, for it is mediæval, not antique. The odd thing is that it is rather good. The quantities of miracles effected at the shrine are proved by the quantities of wax arms and other parts of the human body which adorn the church. One of the legs has lace frills down to the ankle decorously counterfeited in the wax. The boys who were with us told us that it was a very holy place, but that did not prevent them from ringing the bell to summon the faithful on a fool's errand in the hopes of winning a smile from Stephana, who scolded them, instead, in the prettiest way. In March the rocks all round are covered with a low spurge, which has a peculiarly brilliant yellow flower.

THE TEMPLE OF PROSERPINE AND THE LAKE OF PERGUSA

In the days when Enna was the centre of the worship of the Earth-Goddess she had her temple on the peak of the mountain now known as the Rocca di Cerere, while her daughter, the Maiden, had her temple on the rival peak. Below the platform on which the Maiden's temple stood stands to-day the monastery of Minorite Friars, whom Baedeker describes as the Reformed Friars. But the brother who turned Stephana out of the vineyard which occupies the site of the temple protested that he was not *reformed*. That was not the reason why

THE TEMPLE OF PROSERPINE & LAKE PERGUSA

he objected to her presence there. If the Queen of Italy tried to stand there she would be ejected. Stephana smiled indulgently, and the brother tried to effect a recompense by inviting me to go over their establishment. I was nettled at his refusal to allow Stephana to stand on the site of the famous temple. The contamination surely could not have been serious on the open air of a mountain-top. Probably he was nettled too at finding that his

establishment did not interest me so much as the site of a heathen temple. I tried to effect a recompense in turn by photographing him in the queer little vineyard, with its thin line of cypresses, which occupies the flat temple-site on the tip-top of a mountain almost as high as Snowdon. I did not find his conversation edifying. Unlike the street urchins, who had accompanied us and who talked about it glibly, he had never heard of the Earth-Goddess's Lake of Pergusa, which lay in the Fields of Enna below us, enclosed in a basin-rim of mountains, whose sides were seamed into meadows, and adorned with the pink flush of many almond trees in blossom and the dark green of not infrequent cypresses.

Pergusa has its fits and starts. Sometimes it is full of splendid eels or, as when we saw it, has its breast crowded with water-fowl. It is to-day one of the best places in Sicily for the cacciatore, apart from the fact that its strong appetite for malaria has been increased by the flax-steeping industry which now flourishes on its banks. Since it is no longer surrounded by the flowery groves of which Ovid sang or romanced, the view, close-to, is nothing to the view from where we stood, in which it had for its background half the

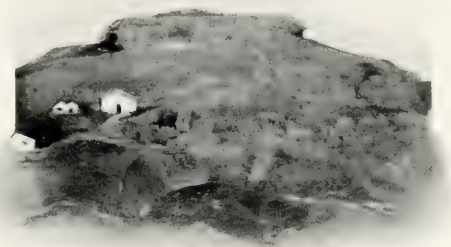


Photo by the Author.

THE HILL ONCE CROWNED BY THE TEMPLE OF PROSERPINE

IN SICILY

mountains of Sicily. The mountains in the foreground, very appropriately, were pink with the débris of the sulphur mines. The view of the city of Castrogiovanni, which occupies the centre between the two peaks, is a little like the view of Siena, apart from the latter's towers. Lofty towers are not a feature of the island, whose earthquakes are responsible for its important place in mythology.

S. SPIRITO, THE SCENE OF THE ANNUNCIATION

The urchins had been tugging at Stephana's sleeve for the past quarter of an hour to induce her to move on to the little Church of the Holy Spirit, where they had promised to show her the tiles on which the Virgin knelt when she was receiving the Annunciation that she was to be the mother of the Saviour, and the little fire-box at which she did her cooking. Of course, as I have mentioned above, she never would have received the Annunciation at Castrogiovanni if it had not been for the fact that Ceres was there already, and her worshippers needed to have their traditions taken on somehow.

It was a poor little church, pathetic and captivating in its poverty. Directly we entered, we were met by a recumbent image of the Virgin in blue and pink sarcenet, with a cardboard dove hovering over her, in a sort of ante-chapel. In the chamber behind, in the midst of the common brick tiles of the country, is a little square formed of nine green tiles, which have a wooden form placed across them with the words "*Figura del luoco ove fu Annunziata Maria Virgine.*" And behind that again, in a little dark recess like an ordinary chimney nook, is a tiny fire-box of the ordinary pattern, made of stone or brick, with the inscription "*Fucolare della Virgine.*" There is not the slightest trace of antiquity about either the tiles or the stove. They are not ancient, they are not mediæval, they do not belong to the Renaissance or baroque periods, they are frankly modern and common. The utmost antiquity they can reach is that of the inscription on the façade of the church: "*R. hic domus dei est et porta cæli A.D. 1817. Edificata est domus domini supra verticem montium et venient ad eam omnes gentes. 1817.*" They have nothing like the antiquity of the poor but extremely interesting

KING MANFRED'S CASTLE

Christ with bound hands and an antique red cloak in an adjoining chapel, the interest of which, however, was rather spoilt by the claim of the moth-eaten sacristan that the crown of thorns lying at its feet was the original.

At the Church of the Holy Spirit at Castrogiovanni they claim too much. According to their showing there is not a church in Rome so richly endowed. They even, in the vaults cut in the adjoining rock, show you the niches where the twelve apostles sat, though it is doubtful whether any of the chambers or the tombs go back to Roman times. The Virgin, painted on the earthenware plaque found in 1736, was obviously painted for the purpose. But it is a dear little church, with its queer little avenue and its shallow campanile, and had something to do with a hermit; we could not exactly find what, though Stephana pricked up her ears like a war-horse at the word. She had never seen a real hermit.

The walk back was a very pretty one, on account of the charming glimpses of the city across the ravine. Occasionally, also, we came to a good church like that of S. Tommaso, which makes a right angle with the Church of the Anima Santa, and has a fine Gothic tower and an elegant loggia.

In Castrogiovanni they still hang an ivy bush outside the house where wine is sold; there are many ivy bushes.

KING MANFRED'S CASTLE AND ITS PRISONERS

In the afternoon the sun shone out gaily, and we went off to explore the Rock of Ceres and the adjoining castle of King Manfred, a fine large fourteenth-century castle, singularly picturesque in the distance, but not to be compared for architectural merit or solidity of masonry with the castle of Villeneuve, opposite Avignon, or even Aucassin's castle of Beaucaire. It is now the town prison. Visitors are admitted freely, because the prisoners are shut up in two large rooms, with windows closely barred but otherwise open from floor to ceiling. The prisoners, who crowd into the windows, looked very cheerful. There were some such pretty, modest-looking young women, neatly dressed and with their children, and none of even the

IN SICILY

male prisoners looked very villainous. I inquired how such respectable people happened to be in prison, and the jailer said they were there mostly for debt, the knife, robbery, and quarrels. "There were many murderers," he added briskly. All the men prisoners were together and all the women, and, as none of them wore irons, the jailer had doubtless to interfere from time to time.

We have seen many prisoners since we came into Italy being taken about, escorted by *carabinieri*. Even the women-prisoners wear irons on journeys, and Italians handcuff their prisoners very cruelly. Their handcuffs are shaped like the letter B, instead of being a pair of manacles coupled with a short chain, such as prisoners wear on their hands in England during removal. When an Italian prisoner is handcuffed the B fastens his arms across his body, with the right hand pointing to the left, and the left hand pointing to the right. The handcuffs are then tightened round his wrists with a screw as close as he can bear, so that he cannot move his arms at all; and if there are two or more being taken together, they are linked



KING MANFRED'S CASTLE

Platone, Inverona.

THE ROCK AND TEMPLE OF CERES

by dog-chains padlocked to their handcuffs. It is no uncommon sight in a railway station to see five or six men fettered together in this helpless way, and they are generally such awful-looking villains that you forgive the cruelty with which they are bound. But it is a different matter to see, as I have seen, a respectable-looking young woman of the shopkeeping class walking between two *carabinieri*, with her wrists in these *manette*—though she has very likely murdered someone.

The towers of the castle look much best from the outside. They are mostly more or less ruinous from the inside, though one or two contain remains of fine vaulted chambers of the fourteenth century. Most of the space within the walls is taken up with gardens, which had two suspicious grave-shaped holes in them when we paid our visit. I assured Stephana that they had been made in the attempt to find antiques, but I had my suspicions that they were made for a grimmer purpose. The entrance to the castle was one of the most picturesque things about it, rather in the style of the noble entrance to the city of Mola above Taormina, or the Toca Gate at Taormina; in other words, a vista of mountains through a Gothic arch.

THE ROCK AND THE TEMPLE OF CERES

This vista of mountains encircled the far-famed Fields of Enna. We did not linger long in the castle, for we were anxious to climb the snow-white Rock of Ceres. It is, Freeman says, impossible to doubt that this was the site of her temple. The flat top is obviously an artificially-prepared platform, and the site the very finest conceivable, finer even than that of the Parthenon; for this grand square-headed rock, which formed the eastern peak of the mountain, is separated from the rest by a small ravine, and commands views of Castrogiovanni itself; of the twin city of Calascibetta, with the snow-capped Madonian range behind; of distant Assaro, another rock-city, tipped with sunshine; of the Lake of Pergusa, lying in its cradle of hills; and of Etna, the monarch of mountains.

IN SICILY

THE PEOPLE AND ACCOMMODATION AT CASTROGIOVANNI

The people of Castrogiovanni are very well behaved and extremely fine-looking. Even the boys keep a tolerably respectful distance, and leave interludes in their request for cinque centesimi. It is a land of top-boots and stocking caps and shawls. The shawls are not worn by the women in Castrogiovanni. You never see a woman about the streets, and, when they stand in their balconies, they do not protect themselves from the weather. Perhaps they are loath to give up the smallest iota of freedom.

The hotel at Castrogiovanni must have been torture to Stephana. She was so fastidiously clean in every notion. And not only were

the bedrooms fleaeay and ill-furnished, but the dining-room was more obviously a place in which men had smoked than a place in which ladies were to dine.

I have not mentioned Witheridge because he was swithering on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand he was always talking about fresh air and the need for bracing weather, and how he longed to be camping out, and on the other hand he really hated any hotel that was not first class. The roughing for which he was anxious was an ambitious kind of roughing it—with lions or bears to shoot, and Arab or Red Indian followers. He did not care for the kind of roughing it which just implies being patient like a woman. Stephana bore the fleas and the brick floor like a Spartan in her thankfulness to have seen Enna, but Witheridge simply sulked like a scolded barmaid. The Piedmontese landlady was true to herself to the end. She



A WOMAN OF ENNA

From a water-colour painting by Salvatore Politi

EARLY HISTORY OF ENNA

imagined that we should be so pleased with our Spartan fare that we should be willing to pay an increase on the price to which she had agreed, and followed us to the very coach, asking us to give her something more, like any boy who begs for five centesimi in the street.

The utmost one could say for her was that the food, what there was of it, was fairly well cooked, but five francs a day would have been ample for the kind of house and kind of table that she kept. At the Leon Bianco at S. Gimignano you get four times as good for four francs and a half. Stephana's summing up of the accommodation at Castrogiovanni was characteristic and, I think, just. She said that only a German could do it comfortably.

THE FLOWERS OF ENNA

I must add a word about the flowers of Enna. In the immediate neighbourhood of Castrogiovanni we saw nothing except the brilliant yellow spurge and the narcissus and the almond blossom, but between Castrogiovanni and S. Caterina Xirbia we saw masses of white and yellow cabbage, marigolds almost vermilion in their brilliance, crimson mallows, rich purple anemones, and an exquisite puce-coloured wild stock, growing not in the rocks, but on the ground; while near Caltanissetta we came upon a quantity of the brilliant scarlet anemone, known in the London market as *anemone fulgens*, and in the Holy Land as Solomon's Lily.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF ENNA (CASTROGIOVANNI)

To take leave of Castrogiovanni without adverting to its history is like writing an account of Westminster and leaving out the Abbey. For there is hardly any city in Sicily so identified with resistance to her conquerors. It was always regarded as the strongest fortress in the island, and, guarded as it is by leagues of surrounding mountains to impede an invader's supplies, and by an almost continuous ring of precipices to defy his assaults, this well-watered city on an isolated peak, three thousand feet and more high, could, before the introduction of modern artillery, defy attack while its provisions lasted.

Its first fall, four centuries before Christ, marked the end of the

IN SICILY

native Sikelian resistance to the domination of Syracuse. The Romans regarded it as the key of the interior of the island. In the year 260 B.C., during the first Punic war, it was one of the most debatable points between Roman and Carthaginian.

But it was destined to have a more sinister aspect in the history of Roman Sicily as the scene of two great tragedies. The first was while Marcellus was besieging Syracuse. L. Pinarius, the Roman commandant in Enna, had a force so small that he was practically at the mercy of the citizens. Learning the treachery which was contemplated, he determined to be beforehand, and summoning the citizens to their assembly in the theatre, fell upon them with his soldiers and killed them all. He saved Enna, but at the cost of setting all Sicily aflame at this outrage on the holy city, for Enna was the Mecca of the island.

ENNA, THE CENTRE OF THE SLAVE WAR—THE PROBABLE SITE OF ITS THEATRE

The next outrage came from a very different quarter. A little more than half a century later Sicily had become the granary of the Republic, but the corn was raised in a peculiarly exasperating way. Wealthy proprietors, chiefly Roman *equites*, to whom the Roman magistrates of Sicily were accountable after their term of office, though there were among them a few of the leading natives, owned enormous areas of land, cultivated by gangs of slaves in fetters. The chains, added to the fierceness of the Sicilian sun, rendered the hardships of cultivating terrible, and the hardship was increased by the fact that many of the slaves were freeborn Sicilians, equal in rank to their masters, but reduced to slavery by perjury. The slaves were so numerous and the masters so few that horrible cruelties were practised to keep them in subjection. The most notorious for cruelty were not Romans, but two Sicilian Greeks, Damophilus and his wife Megallis, whose young daughter, however, was equally well known for the tender-heartedness with which she helped their slaves to evade the cruelty of her parents.

One day in B.C. 139 the slaves rose and carried Damophilus and

ENNA AND THE SLAVE WAR

Megallis to a mass meeting in the theatre, which had witnessed the massacre by Pinarius. Perhaps Damophilus had been more merciful than his wife; at all events, two of his own slaves sprang upon him and killed him outright. Megallis, wearing the chains she had been accustomed to put upon her female slaves, was handed over to their tender mercies, and when she had been tortured by inches to the verge of death was thrown over the precipice above which the theatre was built.

The site of the theatre is not indicated by any documentary evidence, but this episode implies that it stood where it might be expected to stand, in the hollow of the hill once crowned by the Temple of Proserpine, for the precipices are more abrupt here than at any other point, and the site commands the best view of the holy Lake of Pergusa, on whose banks Pluto came to Proserpine.

The legend, which is founded upon the physical fact of seed having to go under the earth for a period of gestation in the dark months, is, of course, of extreme importance in the island of the corn-goddess Ceres, the granary of the ancient world. The slaves killed all the freemen of Enna except the workers in iron, whom they reduced to slavery and forced to manufacture weapons. Their leader, Eunus, became king of the island. The revolt lasted seven years, and during most of the time Enna was the rallying ground of the two hundred thousand slaves who flew to arms.

It is pleasant to know that Damophilus's tender-hearted daughter, by the loyalty of her father's slaves, got away quite uninjured.

ENNA—ITS SACREDNESS. THE CROWNING OUTRAGE OF VERRES

But Enna, as Cicero points out in one of the most magnificent passages in his famous indictment of Verres, suffered less from the depredations of the slaves than the depredations of Verres. I have quoted his splendid exordium on the two goddesses already. He went on to say that here, where almost the cradles of these goddesses were found, and indeed over all Sicily, their worship prevailed to a wonderful extent. This was so recognised by all nations that when,

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in the disastrous and critical times which ensued at Rome after the death of Tiberius Gracchus, recourse was had to the Sibylline Books, and it was found set down that the most ancient Ceres was to be appeased, the priests chosen by the decemvirs went in solemn procession, not to her magnificent temple in Rome, but to the temple in her own far-away city of Enna. And it was her image there, one of the most sacred images in the world—"one of brass, of moderate size, but extraordinary workmanship, with the torches in its hands, very ancient, by far the most ancient of all the statues in that temple,"—whose carrying off to adorn one of his villas was the crowning outrage offered by Verres to Sicily.

ENNA AND ITS TEMPLE OF CERES

"For thoughts of that temple, of that place, of that holy religion come into my mind. Everything seems present before my eyes—the day on which, when I had arrived at Enna, the priests of Ceres came to meet me with garlands of vervain and with fillets; the concourse of citizens, among whom, while I was addressing them, there was such weeping and groaning that the most bitter grief seemed to have taken possession of the whole. They did not complain of the absolute way in which



Photo by]

[the Author.

THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE OF CERES

ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS TEMPLES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

CICERO AT ENNA

the tenths were levied, nor of the plunder of property, nor of the iniquity of tribunals, nor of that man's unhallowed lusts, nor of his violence, nor of the insults by which they had been oppressed and overwhelmed. It was the divinity of Ceres, the antiquity of their sacred observances, the holy veneration due to their temple, which they wished should have atonement made to them by the punishment of that most atrocious and audacious man. They said that they could endure everything else; that to everything else they were indifferent. This indignation of theirs was so great that you might suppose that Verres, like another king of hell, had come to Enna and had carried off, not Proserpine, but Ceres herself. And, in truth, that city does not appear to be a city, but a shrine of Ceres. The people of Enna think that Ceres dwells among them; so that they appear to me not to be citizens of that city, but to be all priests, to be all ministers and officers of Ceres" (Cicero, *In Verrem* v. 50).

And a page or two earlier (*In Verrem* v. 48) he says:—

"It is an old opinion, O judges, which can be proved from the most ancient records and monuments of the Greeks, that the whole island of Sicily was consecrated to Ceres and Libera. Not only did all other nations think so, but the Sicilians themselves were so convinced of it that it appeared a deeply rooted and innate belief in their minds. For they believe that these goddesses were born in these districts, and that corn was first discovered in this land, and that Libera was carried off, the same goddess whom they call Proserpine, from a grove in the territory of Enna, a place which, because it is situated in the centre of the island, is called the navel of Sicily. And when Ceres wished to seek her and trace her out, she is said to have lit her torches at those flames which burst out at the summit of Ætna, and carrying these torches before her, to have wandered over the whole earth. But Enna, where those things which I am speaking of are said to have been done, is in a high and lofty situation, on the top of which is a large level plain and springs of water which are never dry. And the whole of the plain is cut off and separated, so as to be difficult of approach. Around it are many lakes and groves, and beautiful flowers at every season of the year; so that the place

IN SICILY

itself seems to testify to that abduction of the virgin which we have heard of from our boyhood. Near it is a cave turned towards the north, of unfathomable depth, where they say that Father Pluto suddenly rose out of the earth in his chariot, and carried the virgin off from that spot, and that on a sudden, at no great distance from Syracuse, he went down beneath the earth, and that immediately a lake sprang up in that place; and there to this day the Syracusans celebrate anniversary festivals with a most numerous assemblage of both sexes."

ENNA'S LATER INVADERS AND VISITORS

Sicily did not escape the invasion of Goth and Vandal, and for 400 years it gave allegiance of a kind to the eastern empire, which, indeed, lost it by a dynastic quarrel. In the reign of Michael the Stammerer, Euphemius of Syracuse tried to make himself emperor, and to effect it asked help of Ziyadet Allah, the Aghlabite, Prince of Kairawan, and offered to hold the island of him. Euphemius was killed in the siege of Enna, then known as *Castrum Johannis*, which defied the onslaughts of the Saracens for no less than thirty years, and a couple of centuries after it had fallen into their hands repeated the exploit by holding out for twenty-six years against the Norman invaders. It came, however, within an ace of being captured by Roger, in the great battle fought under its walls early in the war, in which, with 700 of his irresistible men-at-arms, Roger routed 15,000 Moslem horse, with the loss of two-thirds of their number. The figures are, of course, apocryphal. By no possibility could 15,000 horses be accommodated on the rock of *Castrogiovanni*.

The last great name but one associated with *Castrogiovanni* is that of the Emperor Frederick II., but some of his connection undoubtedly belongs to the able Frederick II. of Aragon, the real restorer of Sicilian independence, who built the ruined castle below the Temple of Proserpine. The last of all is that of Cardinal Newman, who, in 1833, lay there sick of the fever which so nearly carried him off sixty years before his time. (*Vide* chapter xxv.)

If I have written at length of the history of *Castrogiovanni*, I have also been merciful to my readers, for I have only touched it where the history of the island hung upon it.

CHAPTER XXV.

WITH CARDINAL NEWMAN IN SICILY— AT CASTROGIOVANNI

NEWMAN'S MIRACULOUS RECOVERY AT CASTROGIOVANNI*

IT seems as if history never meant to have done with Castrogiovanni, for we have it written in the diary and letters of one of the greatest and most beloved Englishmen of the last century, that Castrogiovanni marked the turning-point in his life. I refer, of course, to Cardinal Newman, who lay there for days not knowing whether he was to live or to die. Want of food, want of sleep, and other unwonted hardships had made him the prey of a malignant fever which was ravaging the island in 1833. It was long before he received any medical assistance at all, and then it was only from a native doctor, to whom he had to explain himself in as much Latin as is common to Oxford dons and Roman Catholic priests. Added to this he had no comforts and no nurse, no one, in fact, to look after him but his faithful Neapolitan guide, Gennaro, and his muleteer. He was pulled through by his conviction, repeated over and over again to himself during his fever—a kind of gastric fever—that God had work for him in England. While his mind was tossing, as he lay on his bed of fever, the ideas which led to the part he took in *Tracts for the Times* had their genesis. All the world knows that he was not to stop at them; he did not stop until he was a prince of the

* Much the best source of information for Newman's sojourn in Sicily is the *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman*, by Annie Mozley (Longmans, Green, and Co., 2 vols., 1893), upon which this chapter is chiefly based as regards biographical facts.

IN SICILY

Church—the ancient Church—of which he could hardly speak with fairness when he was in Sicily. Canon Donaldson, in his *Five Great Oxford Leaders*, writes: “The result of his foreign tour, though it in some respects diminished his horror of Romanism, yet did not remove from his mind the impression that the Continental Church was in a sadly degraded condition, and confirmed him in his views of the Church of England as a divine society.” Had Newman died at Castrogiovanni, it would have been no event except for the Fellows of Oriel and such few beyond Oxford as looked up to them. But Newman’s struggling back to health, and resuming his hold on a life which was to last beyond the term of man, has conferred more importance on Castrogiovanni than any event since the lances of Roger the Norman passed into its gates by the same road that Saracen and Roman, Greek and Sikel, had used before them.

THE INFLUENCE OF SICILY UPON NEWMAN

Newman wrote at Taormina, while he was still in perfect health: “I never knew that Nature could be so beautiful. To see that view (the view from the Greco-Roman theatre, of Etna and the Straits of Messina) was the nearest approach to seeing Eden. Oh, happy I! It was worth coming all the way, to endure sadness, loneliness, weariness, to see it. I felt for the first time in my life that I should be a better and more religious man if I lived there.”

The view from Castrogiovanni has not the Eden beauty of the view from the hill of Taurus, but to a man of Newman’s poetical temperament it is even grander. All the chief mountains of Sicily, culminating in the snow-capped dome of Etna, are visible from it—a tossing sea, whose waves are volcanic ranges. And, engulfed in them at the very foot of the city, the holy city of Enna, the Mecca of the worshippers of the ancient goddess, is the holy Lake of Pergusa, which, with the other holy Lake of Palici, are the oldest landmarks in the history of religion in Europe. These are the sacred places of the worshippers of the elemental gods. The cult of the All-Mother, the Earth-Mother, the Corn-Goddess, grew on the rich volcanic lands, pierced by the outlets of subterranean fires, which, to

NEWMAN AT CASTROGIOVANNI

primitive peoples, seemed the entrance to the lower world. For the dark part of the year the daughter of the great goddess, who in the vicinity of Athens itself, at Eleusis, was venerated as the greatest of the gods, spent with her ravisher below the earth. In the spring, the *incantevole* spring of the South, she came back fountaining flowers and young green leaves.

For the best part of twenty centuries before Newman came to Enna, to be weighed in the balance of life and death, the worship of Ceres and Proserpine had been adapted to the worship of our Lord and His mother. But the atmosphere of the primitive faith hangs over the city still. There is not a child who cannot talk of Cerere. And this, though with the exception of an antique statue or two, and a little Roman work near the washing-pool outside the city, there is nothing older in the place than King Manfred's Castle. Castrogiovanni, with its grim antiquity and grim beauty of panorama, is, if anywhere, the place for great thoughts to be born. And when do thoughts so dominate a man as while he is lying low of a fever with his body too impotent to toss?

I have seen nothing to guide me as to where Newman lay at Castrogiovanni, beyond the fact that it was in a house of the better sort, and that during part of the time a great fair was held under its windows. That there was a church adjoining goes for nothing in a city which



*Photo by
the Author.*

A MEDIEVAL HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT AT CASTROGIOVANNI

IN SICILY

still has thirty-six churches for its twenty thousand inhabitants. He was not well enough to make any examination of the antiquities of the city. He makes hardly any allusion to them beyond the fact that a Roman column (which does not exist now, if it existed then) could be seen from where he sat outside the hotel, and that the cathedral seemed to him to have a Norman interior, which it certainly has not.

NEWMAN'S COURAGE IN FACING HARDSHIPS IN SICILY

One is struck in reading about Newman's tour in Sicily by the extraordinary resolution and fortitude which he displayed. I never met him, it is true, until he was an old man, who had lived for many years in the strictest religious discipline, but it would have meant a good deal to a much more vigorous man to have gone over Sicily as he did and when he did. On his first visit he went there in a large steamer full of tourists, as Dr. Lunn's parties go now; but this taxed the limited hotel capabilities of the Sicily of that day so severely, and robbed it of its proper atmosphere to such an extent, that when he went back shortly after he avoided the steamers and went by sailing ship. As he could not by himself afford the facilities which would have been within his reach as a member of a party, he had to rough it very severely. Going by sea from Catania to Syracuse, he had to make the voyage in a speronara, an open boat, no better than a huge fishing smack. Returning by land, he had to ride on a mule an immense day's journey through rivers in flood and wild country haunted by brigands. It was in repeating this mule journey from Catania to Girgenti that he broke down with fever at Leonforte, and struggled to Castrogiovanni to die. He had had to buy all his food at Naples, and most of it proved to be bad. It was cooked by his guide over a spirit lamp, and sometimes he had to go without food altogether for twenty-four hours. But his greatest trial of all seems to have been with the fleas, which never gave him any sleep till the exhaustion of fever set in. So bad were they in one place that he secured some relief by the servant swilling the floor under his bed with water.

NEWMAN'S EXPERIENCES

NEWMAN'S EXPERIENCES IN SICILY

Brigands do not seem to have been so common in those days, though at Segesta and elsewhere he was sure the country people would have robbed him if they had dared. At Castrogiovanni the doctor and his landlord chose the articles belonging to him which they would like to receive as presents, and the doctor actually carried his off, and had to be compelled to restore them by the magistrates. But his guide, Gennaro, who had charge of all his money and valuables while he was ill, did not abstract anything, though he almost insisted on Newman's giving him a favourite old blue cloak, which the future cardinal had the strength to refuse. He gave him many other things, however, and the present of a £10 note beyond their bargain, and it is satisfactory to hear that Gennaro afterwards got a place in the family of Lord Carrington.

Newman liked the Sicilians very much. He summarised them in a sentence which is as true now as it was on the day when it was written—"Dirt, with simplicity and contentment." But the dirt is not for want of washing their clothes. He often wishes that he had not gone to Sicily alone; he was not sure that his fever did not come as a chastising from Providence for his presumption in not taking the advice of wiser friends. And apropos of the same subject, he makes other of his proverbial sayings—"I felt being alone, not because of the solitude, but because a tour is the best time for turning acquaintances into friends, and I was losing a great opportunity," and "I was setting out on an expedition which would be pleasant in memory rather than in performance." But elsewhere he says, "Little as I have seen of Sicily, it has filled me with inexpressible delight, and (in spite of dirt and other inconveniences) I am drawn to it as by a loadstone . . . From the moment I saw Sicily I kept saying to myself, 'This is that Sicily.'"

But the beggars seem to have been worse in his day; they divided the cities up into regular beats, and their whining made his gorge rise in a manner which might have been tempered in his last years. He alludes to one circumstance which has escaped my notice—the quarter-

IN SICILY

ing of English soldiers at Castrogiovanni. Perhaps the most striking episode in his whole stay there was while he was recovering from the fever, when he put his head under the clothes to escape the church bells, and the people regarded the heretic, who afterwards became a cardinal of their own Church, as a devil tormented by the sounds of Christian worship.

Eventually he struggled down to Palermo. He came so near death at Castrogiovanni that he actually gave his Neapolitan servant his last instructions as to the disposal of his property, including the immediate personal effects, which he was to take for himself. But he was sure that he would not die, as the phrases, "I shall not die; I have not sinned against the light," "I thought God had work for me," show. The whole story of his illness and the rest of the tour in Sicily is told at considerable length and most interestingly in *The Letters and Correspondence*, edited by his sister, Mrs. Mozley, and published by Longmans in 1893.

THE WRITING OF "LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT"

He took passage from Palermo to Marseilles in an orange boat, and it was on that voyage that he wrote what to the members of his old Church will last longer than anything among his writings, the hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light," which, it will be seen from the date, refers to the part he took in writing *Tracts for the Times*. The kindly light is said to have had a concrete counterpart in a lighthouse in the Straits of Bonifacio, and the allusions to being far from home were literal as well as allegorical, for he was very homesick, and had been becalmed a week in the Straits as he tells us in the *Apologia*.

HOW I MET NEWMAN

I cannot quit the subject without referring to some words quoted by Mrs. Mozley about his writing down an account of his Sicilian tour seven years afterwards at Littlemore: "The thought keeps pressing on me while I write this, What am I writing it for? For myself. I may look at it once or twice in my life, and what sympathy

HOW I MET NEWMAN

is there in *my* looking at it? Who will care to be told such details as I have put down above? Shall I ever have in my old age spiritual children who will take an interest?"

I cannot pose as a spiritual child of Newman, but I have followed his footsteps in Sicily as I followed them at Oxford. While I was a scholar of Trinity, Newman—a few years before he became a cardinal—was elected a Fellow of the college, to which sixty years before he had been elected a scholar, the first Roman Catholic Fellow in Oxford since the days of King James II. He came to Trinity to be installed. When I came back from the river one afternoon the college messenger informed me that he had shown "most distinguished company" over my rooms, the Fellows of the college, including Father Newman, headed by the President. I gave an involuntary glance at the looking-glass over my mantelpiece, which, in the fashion of those days, had its frame wedged all over with photographs of the beauties of the stage. The messenger caught my eye and said, "The President, sir, when he saw your pictures, he *corfed*." But President Wayte, in spite of his satirical little cough, invited me to spend the evening with Father Newman, as I had not had the pleasure of being in my rooms when he visited them. They had never been regarded as his rooms till he arrived on that occasion and declared them to be his. He recognised them by the fact of their being the only panelled rooms up that staircase and by their looking out on the wall between Trinity and Balliol, where the wild snapdragons grow which inspired the well-known passage in one of his poems—the wild snapdragons which he must have seen in their glory on the ancient walls of Sicily.

PART III.

B.

GIRGENTI

AND ITS GLORIOUS GREEK TEMPLES



THE TELAMON (TWENTY-FIVE FEET LONG) IN THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER

From "Il Viaggiatore in Girgenti," by Raphael Politi, 1826

CHAPTER XXVI.

GIRGENTI

THE FORMER UNRULINESS OF ITS INHABITANTS

WRITING by the light of our experiences in 1896, I said Girgenti does not enter much into people's calculations as a health-resort, for the simple reason that for foreigners life is hardly possible at Girgenti. It has the roughest, most impudent population in all Sicily and Italy, and the authorities, from the heads of the province and municipality down to the constables of the *carabinieri*, do little for the protection of strangers, who may easily get into a very ugly scrape. The impudence of the population is worthy of Canton; they crowd round the stranger by scores, and if he resents it he runs a chance of being mobbed. There are only two ways of escaping their attention; one is to spend your time among the ruins of the temples, which the ordinary inhabitant of Girgenti ignores, and the other is to do as we did—hire an able-bodied man, which is only a matter of a franc a day, to assault everybody who comes too near you. Gallo Lugra was our bravo's name; he had served his time in the Italian cavalry, could speak Italian as well as Sicilian, and was an intelligent as well as a

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strong man, and yet he was perfectly willing to carry our parcels and assault our enemies for a paper franc, about eightpence half-penny, a day.

NOT SO BRIGANDY AS IT LOOKS

The arrival and departure from Girgenti is also a very brigandy-looking affair. You generally arrive late at night, and leave in the small hours of the next morning but one, and have a good long drive from the railway station, which is situated on another hilltop. And winding between these great hills in the startling loneliness you expect brigands to stop your carriage every minute. However, near as it is to the sulphur mines, which are the cradle of Sicilian brigandage, there are said not to be any brigands in the immediate neighbourhood.

IMPROVEMENT IN BEHAVIOUR

I am happy to say that the earlier of these remarks no longer applies. At the suggestion of Signor de Angelis, proprietor of our hotel, I wrote to some high officials, the prefect of the province, and, as far as I remember, the sindaco of the city, making a formal complaint of the inhabitants, and saying that they could not hope to get the much-desired *forestieri* to visit Girgenti while the latter could not go out into the city without being mobbed. Orders were at once issued to prevent the occurrence of the behaviour complained of, and now even the boys are not very troublesome. And one may reasonably expect to be followed and worried by boys in any Sicilian city except Palermo and Syracuse. They are shocking at Messina.

ARRIVING AT GIRGENTI

As regards brigandage, Girgenti still retains its good name; but the unlicensed *facchini* outside the railway station are almost as formidable—to your baggage. No sooner are the *roba* of a large party outside the station than a dozen or two of desperate-looking ruffians seize each a piece and try to bear it off to their favourite flyman, or, if they are not watched, to limbo. Each of the flymen

A TYPICAL NATIVE INN

so favoured, if there is no one else to hire him, protests that this constitutes engaging him. But their characters are known, and two or three police are in attendance who belabour them unmercifully; indeed, they could not help much more if they drew their swords, and then your *roba*, as they call baggage in Sicily, is restored to the cabmen of your choice. The conductor of the Hotel Belvedere was also energetic in the good cause, but this *mêlée* outside the railway station would be terrifying to anyone who did not know the endearing little ways of Girgentines. When we reached the hotel on our second visit we were welcomed in state by the portly landlord, a typical Sicilian landlord of a typical Sicilian inn, as courtly and dignified as a Spanish *hidalgo*, but willing to do anything for you with his own hands. And I rather wanted a warm reception, because for twelve hours it was touch and go whether I should be down with typhoid fever. I had had it once, and knew its pains and symptoms only too well. Our party was naturally very much alarmed, because Girgenti was the best part of a day's journey from Palermo, the nearest place where one can consult a foreign (English-speaking-German) doctor. And Sicilian doctors are apt to be such terrible kill-or-cures, the really most dangerous part about consulting them being your difficulty in describing your ailments to them, and their difficulty in making you understand what they wish you to take and do. Fortunately I have strong recuperative powers, and managed to throw the fever off, though I was quite ill for a couple of days, obliged to avoid both the heat of noon and the cool of sundown—the fever time in Italy.

A TYPICAL NATIVE INN

I do not think that in any even half-civilised part of Sicily you could find a more charming and typical native inn than the "Belvedere" at Girgenti. In the first place there was the *factotum*. In Sicily quite a large inn is carried on in the unpretentious native way by the *padrone* and his wife and a male *factotum*, who may be, or may not be, their son, and may, or may not be, married. Such an inn may have been a nobleman's palace, or may, like the

IN SICILY

"Belvedere" at Girgenti, have been an extensive public building. Size is nothing; tiled floors are so easy to sweep, and palm brooms take no account of corners. You are lucky if the dust of the room is not purposely swept behind your trunks to avoid the trouble of sweeping it the length of the house and out of the front door. They do not have dustpans in darker Sicily. Dusters they have, but they use them for head-dressing, not for dusting. And there is nothing to do in the bedrooms except make the beds and attend to the washhand-stand, because there is nothing else in the bedrooms; and if you are not sharp enough to pull all the clothes off your bed and strew them about your room, the only part of your bed which will be made is the counterpane. I am not writing this of the Hotel Belvedere, where the rooms were very well furnished in a simple way and the factotum was an angel—the landlord's name was De Angelis.

THE MAN HOUSEMAID

There were not very many people staying there during our 1898 visit, and he was such an ardent admirer of Miss Heriot, that he sighed for fresh worlds to conquer in doing the bedrooms. If he had only known, he never came so near conquering as when he was filling the jug from a jar of the perfect antique shape, to which the loss of a handle and part of the brim, and the hard use of years, had imparted the appearance of a genuine relic of ancient Girgenti. It shone like an old alabaster tomb. All the bedrooms, all our odd wants, were in his care; but he was always punctual, and always had everything in apple-pie order in the low vaulted room, with a view over the temples from its little balcony, and with such funny old-fashioned paper on its walls and such a Sicilian blue ornament on the ceiling, which was our dining-room.

THE DRAWING-ROOM

At the back of the *sala da mangiare* was the *salone*, a much larger and higher vaulted room with an eastern window only. With its broad lounges, it was a bewitching place for a siesta on a hot

THE VIEW FROM THE HOTEL BELVEDERE

summer afternoon. In it were various curios, including some unusually fine specimens of the painted clay figures of Sicilian peasants in the national dress. They were genuine old ones, and in capital condition, and would fetch a long price in a Palermo curio-shop. The *padrone* also sold photographs and the inevitable picture post cards, and some rare old fans.

THE VIEW FROM OUR BEDROOMS



THE HOTEL BELVEDERE, THE CITY WALL, AND THE TEMPLES OF GIRGENTI

From a coloured print in "General Cockburn's Voyage to Sicily, 1815"

Undoubtedly the bedrooms were among the chief charms of the house. They all faced the midday, to use the landlord's expression, and looked down on the city wall and such a glorious view beyond. First there was the Rupe Atenea, which Empedocles separated from the city; and then the broad plain below, which was crowned by the temples and bounded by the sea, but was in the main a map of small farms, dotted with small, plain, square, two-storied buildings with yellow-tiled roofs, and divided by a river; though towards the sea the fields grew larger and were of grass

IN SICILY

or wheat, growing round olives, bounded on the right by Porto Empedocle and the hills down which its train shoots from Girgenti, and on the left by a cliff with a tiny Vesuvius on its top. The temples, from Juno's to Vulcan's, were on the left of the river on a high table-ground, covered with almonds and olives, and a few cypresses and stone pines. On every side except that occupied by the sea there was a background of lofty mountains, a pageant at sunrise or sunset. At sunset the temples were golden, at sunrise they were black, and the schooners in the tiny port, constructed out of the ruins of a single temple, seemed to be floating on pearl. Nearer in there was much to tickle the eye. One could waste half an hour in looking at the broad sunny roof of deep-channeled tiles right under our windows, on which a whole tribe of lizards exchanged courtesies or hunted in the orthodox saurian fashion. It is true that their game was only flies, but they shammed sleep like any crocodile. Underneath this roof came the road, a favourite thoroughfare for peasants, and then the city wall, in an angle of which stood one of our principal delights in Girgenti.

THE SCENE ON THE WALL

This was a tiny church used by the very poor, so poor that they brought their own chairs with them to escape paying their soldo. The bells began to ring as the congregation began to stream in at six o'clock in the morning. One man came to church on a donkey, and it lay down like a dog while he was inside. A little later the wall rang with the quick tramp of soldiers, and then, although it was Sunday, the man who had the prickly-pear orchard below the wall came to potter round. While under the city wall were ridiculous little farms, so many little acropolises, each with its prickly-pears, artichokes, fennel, olives, almonds, and, be it not forgotten, cesspools. Sometimes there were thick hedges of prickly pear. Along that road, morning and evening, poured the stream of goats and the stream of tillers of the fields, riding their mules and asses without much respect of temperature, wearing their great blue hooded cloaks. At midday soldiers used to pass, two with a

REAL CURIOS

camp oven-pot, one with a huge spoon—taking the dinner to some picket, I suppose. Once in a way a man drove by a strong ass laden with two huge and most suspicious-looking jars, each of which filled an entire pannier; and there were relays of aging beggars, who murmured “*Piccola moneta*” if they happened to look up at your windows. To us it was endless pleasure to watch these ragged people, so dirty and yet so clean, riding on their friends, the asses, generally side-saddle. Less often, we would see a *carro*, or waggon, of the long, low, ancient pattern still used so much in some parts of Sicily, notably Catania, with an ancient Sicilian sitting on it, recalling with his air the old saying that “Dignity was a peasant.” Sicily is the land of dignity. You have to add a great deal of thanking for the things you buy there.

In the angle of the city wall, just beyond the chapel, there was one of its towers, such old, old towers, and they went all round the city at intervals.

CURIOS—REAL

Curio-sellers used to bring their wares round to the hotel door—every beggar in Girgenti has a handkerchief to carry curios in. They sold you old Greek coins for their weight in silver, exquisite little Greek vases at prices from a franc downwards, bronze arrowheads and ancient beads for next to nothing. And after what we saw at the excavations of Selinunte, I feel pretty sure that they were genuine. We found plenty of things ourselves in the *débris* below the temples at Girgenti.

THE HOTEL BELVEDERE

This is a regular Sicilian inn; you have to go through the rooms where the family sit to get to the dining-room. The food is first-rate; you have just the food that an Englishman likes. The bread and butter are so good, and the cooking is so crisp. Even if it were uncomfortable there would still be that incomparable view of the fine temples, a thousand feet below, and Porto Empedocle stretching its yellow arms into the clear green sea.

I could fill pages about our life at that sunny old inn. But books are long and lives are short and I must hurry on to the temples.

IN SICILY

THE WALLS OF GIRGENTI

Just below the hotel we zigzagged sharply into the road where we watched the goats and peasants, and sharply downhill past tall sirocco-worn walls full of crimson wild stocks, pink snapdragons, and wild candy-tuft, which, combined with the Judas trees, now in full bloom, and the magenta gladiolus in the fields and pink houses with windows picked out in Reckitt's blue, would give the eye a surfeit of colour if they were not dominated by such a brilliant sun and sky. There seems to be an excuse for plaster here, the sirocco which riddles stone passes by plaster, and there are so many little plaster shrines.



Photo by the Author.

THE SEASON WAS A DRY ONE

A peasant by the wall was slicing prudently to feed his goats

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FACADE OF TEMPLE OF JUNO, GERGENTI
FROM AN OIL PAINTING BY MARGARET THOMAS

Vol. I. *Pl. at. p. 100.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TEMPLES OF GIRGENTI

IT is not easy to imagine anything more impressive than the view from the top of Girgenti, look which way you will. Facing inland, you are on the brow of a precipice, and surrounded by an amphitheatre of wild hills. If you clap your hands wild pigeons whirr in flocks from the face of the rock beneath you. But if you look south—and at Girgenti you naturally look either north or south—you have before you a panorama hardly to be matched even at Athens. For a background you have the deep blue seas of Sicily, and then a plain with jutting capes, covered at the season of the year with thickets of almond trees in flower, beside which even the cherry gardens of Tokyo and Kyoto fail, for in the midst of the sea of pink blossom rise the great Greek temples, two thousand five hundred years old, whose mighty stones have acquired such a brilliant orange tint that it must be seen to be believed. All day long the temples of Girgenti look as if they had the golden glow of sunset on them. There are about ten of them if you count fragments, and those which are built into churches.

To particularise a little, it was in the afternoon of a spring day this year that we left that packed yellow city on the hill to renew our acquaintance with Juno Lacinia and her less regal sisters. But even that prospect could not prevent us revelling in typical little bits of Sicily by the way, such as a man riding a-pillion on a donkey, and a garden with prickly-pears—those prototypes of hairy Sicilian beggars, more than usually fantastic in the way that leaves grew out of leaves—and myrtles embosomed in acres of broad

IN SICILY

beans. Broad beans form one of the staves of life in Sicily. In the spring they are eaten raw—pods and all, I fancy, with the fennel as a sort of desert salad—and dried, they are on sale in every street; indeed, I believe they form the principal article of food in the island.

I do not know if we were more amused at the sheep which were shorn as smooth as parchment on their legs and bellies, although it was only March, or at the lady in a white nun's-veiling dress who drove past us honeymooning, and exclaimed in gentle admiration at the Temple of Concordia, "Oh, that's a nice castle!"

Much the finest of the temples are those of Concordia and Juno, and though I have seen many Greek temples, there is only one that I know of with a finer site than that of Juno Lacinia at Girgenti. And the superiority of the site of the Parthenon lies a good deal in its rising from the superb Propylæa and overlooking the Bay of Salamis. The rocky platform on which Girgenti's Juno stands is 390 feet above the sea, and much of it is a sheer precipice of tawny rock, with great fragments of the temple and the rock itself and the ancient city wall strewing the broken ground below. It is, moreover, on its landward



Photo by Cusi.

THE TEMPLE OF JUNO AND ITS ANCIENT OLIVE TREES

THE TEMPLE OF JUNO

side, surrounded by olive trees old enough to have been planted by Greek hands, with stout, gnarled trunks but growing no higher than a cottage roof.

THE VIEW FROM THE TEMPLE OF JUNO

There is, by-the-by, no reason why it should be called the Temple of Juno Lacinia; but Stephana did not seem to mind this as she sat on the platform of the great temple, which is almost as magnificent as the Parthenon itself, and gazed over the plain strewn with the ruins of other temples, and here and there a great dark carob tree (the carob being the tree from which John the Baptist got the locust beans which, with wild honey, formed his fare, if we are to believe the commentators, who cannot bear the thought of his eating the juicy insect).

THE FLORA OF THE TEMPLE

It gave her special pleasure to see the wild palm, really more of a palmetto, which was new to her and grew luxuriantly at the feet of Juno amid the little blue Greek irises, the wild fennel, the wild onion, the branching asphodels, the foul-smelling Sicilian lords-and-ladies, the queer little green daisies of Sicily, the cranes'-bills, and the yellow vetch she had seen already at Syracuse. Growing profusely here was the lesser celandine, which is almost the first flower to brighten the hedgerows in the English spring.

Juno's temple, if it was hers, is worn by the feet of tourists and the winds of heaven, and the winds of heaven have been the more unkind to it of the two, for while the tourists have only worn a trail up the temple's unaccommodating steps, the sirocco has made its southern face look more like coral than columns. And this marvellous orange temple had such grand Doric columns, as one sees from the northern side. I will not be vain enough to give my own technical description of the temple in the face of Murray, who is always so reliable. Murray says, "It is situated on an eminence at the very angle of the city and at the verge of the precipices (390 feet), with huge masses of rock strewn around, forming a scene irresistibly picturesque. It was raised on a lofty stylobate with a grand flight of steps

IN SICILY

leading to the portico at the east end. The plan is hexastyle-peripteral, the total number of columns in the peristyle being thirty-four. Those on the north side are in a perfect state of preservation, though little of the entablature remains; those on the south side are much deteriorated by exposure to the sirocco. The *cella* is *in antis* at both ends, and within it are the remains of staircases leading to the roof. A portion of the pedestal of the divinity is still standing in the *naos*.



THE TEMPLE OF JUNO, GIRGENTI, FROM BELOW

From the painting by Margaret Thomas

The date of this temple is supposed to be between 480 and 500 B.C., but its association with Juno Lacinia is purely gratuitous."

WELLS AND TOMBS

Quitting this temple, which looks its grandest as you approach it from its sister temple of Concordia, you pass almost immediately an aperture like a well. Looking down this, you see that it is one of those curious antique cisterns of bottle shape and lined with cement. Almost immediately afterwards you come to a number of tombs cut in the top of the rock in clusters, divided by rims only a few inches wide, each niche being about the length and depth of an ordinary

THE TEMPLE OF CONCORDIA

coffin. The wall between the two temples is wonderfully picturesque. It is hewn out of the rock, and has rows and rows of catacomb niches cut on its inner face, every one of which has been rifled of its contents. Also in places huge masses of it have tumbled topsy-turvy down, and in their ruins you find many interesting fragments of pottery. Where the wall is left standing it is in many cases reduced to a mere shell by the tombs cut in it, sometimes in double tiers, and generally in the half-moon shape fashionable for tomb recesses in England in Plantagenet times. In some cases the sirocco has pierced the thin layer of stone left by the cutting of the recess, which gives one a very good notion how the rest of the wall went to pieces.

THE FLORA OF THE TEMPLE

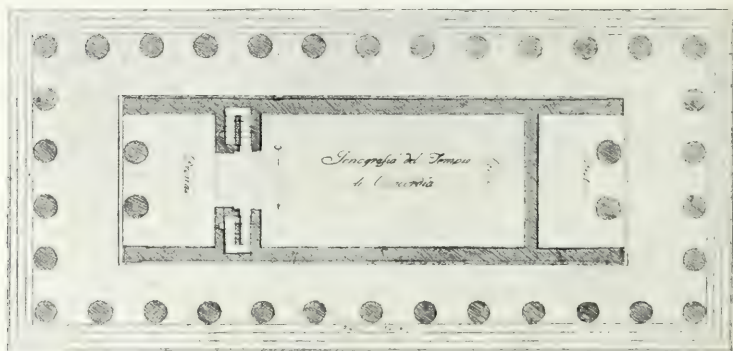
The principal flowers here are the fine shrubby sage which looks so like a *calceolaria*, candy-tuft, the *acanthus*, which is almost in blossom, the corn-marigold, the *orpine*, the dark blue Sicilian *pimpernel*, the stunted Sicilian *Canterbury bell*, the ubiquitous *spurge*, the tiny daisy which reminds you of *chickweed*, and yet another which reminds you of moss, and the tall pink *campion*. There were numbers of wild fig trees springing from the ruins. Through the gaps in which you looked across a plain, seamed by road and torrent and with huge masses of masonry strewn like pebbles below, long trains of primrose-hued sulphur carts were seen creeping to Porto Empedocle. The lizards rioted everywhere, though nowhere more conspicuously, I think, than in the Temple of Juno, where they darted in and out of the tufts of the little crimson *vetch* which looks so velvety. The lie of the two temples and the wall between reminds me very much of the lie of the cathedral ruins and the graveyard of S. Andrews, though they are of course much further from the sea.

THE TEMPLE OF CONCORDIA

Of the same delicious golden colour as the Temple of Juno is the slightly larger Temple of Concordia, which is perhaps the most complete Doric temple in existence except the Theseum at Athens. It has even a staircase perfect, leading to the roof. It owes its preservation,

IN SICILY

according to Murray, to the fact of its having been converted, in the fifteenth century, into a church dedicated to S. Gregory of the Turnips (*S. Gregorio delle rape*), and also to the fact that, being built with marvellous solidity of the ordinary stone of the country, it was not worth while to pull it to pieces for the decoration of the later classical churches of the city. It is wonderfully perfect, and the fact of its not having a roof is of no particular consequence, because it is not certain whether a Greek temple of the very best kind ought to have a roof or be hypæthral. There is a window at each end of the cella, and arches



THE GROUND PLAN OF A GREEK TEMPLE (THE TEMPLE OF CONCORDIA)

From "*Il Viaggiatore in Girgenti*," by Raphael Politi, 1826

have been chipped out of its wall. Having been a stuccoed temple, it had no grand carved metopes.

The ancient city lay all round the temples, though not in the immediate vicinity of these two. For the *temenos* of Juno and the *temenos* of Concordia occupied pretty nearly all the ground we had been examining, as we gathered from the fact that it was occupied almost entirely by tombs. Murray does not give particulars about the Temple of Concordia, but Baedeker says, "The so-called Temple of Concord, farther to the west, is one of the best-preserved ancient temples in existence, as it was converted in the Middle Ages into

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Photo by C. G. P.

THE TEMPLE OF JUNO, CAPRI

CURIOS TO BE PICKED UP

a church of S. Gregorio delle Rape (of the turnips). The arched openings in the wall of the cella belong to that period. The temple is a peripteros-hexastylos, later than that of Juno Lacinia, but also erected before the decline of the Doric style. Its thirty-four columns, with the architrave and frontons, are still standing. The right corner of the front pediment and the incisions for beams are almost all of later origin. Staircases in the corners of the wall of the cella ascend to the summit. On the left of the road, between this and the next temple, on this side of the white wall, is the entrance to an early Christian catacomb, called the Grotta di Fragapane, the centre of which is formed by a circular room with several rows of 'arcosoli' (vaulted tombs in the walls). A second story, lying deeper in the rock, has been made partly accessible. The oldest part of the catacomb appears to date from the second century."

CURIOS TO BE PICKED UP ROUND THE TEMPLES

I do not know anywhere where a tourist can enjoy himself more than wandering round these two temples. They are in themselves so splendid and so marvellously preserved, and among the ruins which crowd under the plateau upon which they stand, you often pick up antiquities. The most beautiful of all the little heads of Tanagra statuettes in my possession was picked up by my boy in the débris under the Temple of Juno Lacinia, and another boy who was with him found the arm, complete except the hand, of a statuette which must have been a couple of feet high, while you could fill your pockets in less than half an hour with interesting fragments of pottery. The *custodi* do not care; their duty, they consider, is to protect from injury the mighty ruins which have stood so long. *De minimis non curat lex*—"their law does not care about fragments." The *custodi* in charge of ruins such as these, are, in Sicily, generally very intelligent men, delighted to meet anyone who has had the training of a scholar, but they are not hard on the laudable anxiety of the tourist to carry away some trifling memento of the ancient glories of their city. At Syracuse, Witheridge bought from one of the attendants in the museum specimens from a newly arrived batch which had not been catalogued.

IN SICILY

THE GROTTA DI FRAGAPANE

The Grotta di Fragapane grew out of one of the bottle-shaped cisterns. Its centre and side chambers have their floors covered with the coffin-shaped tombs, arranged in clusters, with a thin layer of rock between each, and there are quite a number of side chambers with their floors coffined and their walls cut into *arcosoli*. This catacomb is very well ventilated, and with its ramifications is worth the few soldi which content the guide.

Soon after leaving the grotta we passed the Villa Avria, a charming modern stucco villa, with an arabesque roof, and windows tiled round, which is entered by a double flight of white steps with a sweep like a curve of the old English longbow. It is decorated with rows of blue and white majolica pots; it has also tiled dovecots and barn walls. The catacombs of the Grotta di Fragapane are said to extend below it. At its gate a man, with a small mob of boys and kerchiefed women to help him, was mending, with half a dozen lead rivets, a plate made of the soft yellow paste of the country, which could not have cost more than three-halfpence to begin with. He was sitting under the shade of an old-man pear-tree.

THE TEMPLE OF HERCULES

A little to the west of this villa lie the extraordinary ruins of the so-called Temple of Hercules, the technical details of which Murray gives as follows: "It was hexastyle-peripteral, with thirty-eight columns in the peristyle, and with a portico in advance of the cella at either end. The wide-spreading capitals, the bold parabolic curve of the echinus, the short and rapidly diminishing shaft, are all features of an early date. The inner part of the cella is divided into three chambers, the central one being prefaced by a vestibule, an arrangement never found elsewhere in Greek temples, and probably a Roman interpolation, as the masonry appears to indicate. In the central chamber are remains of the pedestal for the statue of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated."

This is the temple where the Alcmena of Zeuxis, one of the most

THE TEMPLE OF HERCULES

celebrated paintings of antiquity, and the famous bronze Hercules which Verres tried to steal, are said to have been kept. Most of the stones of its cella went to build the mole of Porto Empedocle, and, so late as 1860, the Villa Avria. The huge columns, probably shaken down by an earthquake, have fallen outward. I do not think I ever saw the asphodels finer than they are in the ruins of this temple. The fine head of a lion in *pietra calcarea*, now in the museum of Palermo, once formed its back roof-end. The ruins are very interesting, because they show so distinctly the marks of the tools used



[Photo by]

[the Author.]

ASPHODELS ROUND THE TEMPLE OF HERCULES

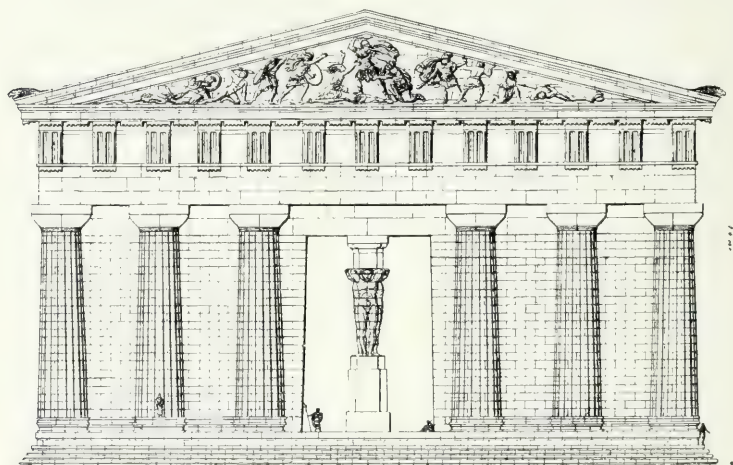
The figure of my son is introduced to show the height of the flowers

in making the drums of the columns, and in smoothing circular spaces on the floor to receive them. In excavating, much care was shown in building up supports before the earth was taken away, so as to keep each block exactly as it fell. There is a fine piece of ancient street visible here, with deep ruts in the stone. It is beyond the powers of description to convey the grandeur of these earthquake-shaken columns with tall snapdragons and oleasters, the prized wild olives from which the ancients cut the crowns of victory, springing out of them. They are also full of the wild palmetto, of huge *acanthi*, at this season of the year bursting into blossom, corn marigolds, sparges, white campion, and wild pears, which in March are huge spikes of white blossom.

For some reason or other the Temple of Hercules seemed the most popular with the honeymooners, who, possibly because it was out of the way, favoured Girgenti, not knowing in the blindness of their hearts that if there is one period of your life more than any

IN SICILY

other when you need the company and support of your fellow-creatures, it is during your honeymoon. The men looked confessedly bored to death, the women were *distraines*, but tried to carry it off before the guide, who, of course, did not care twopence whether they liked it or not, but thought that honeymooners ought to be good for double tips. Bridegrooms always wear flannels on their honeymoon, and yawn; brides have the merit, from the stranger's point of view, of trying to dress their best. I think Witheridge, for the moment, was quite glad of my illness. It made Stephana so anxious that she looked even less "engaged" than usual.



THE TEMPLE OF THE OLYMPIAN JOVE, AS IMAGINED BY RAPHAEL POLITI

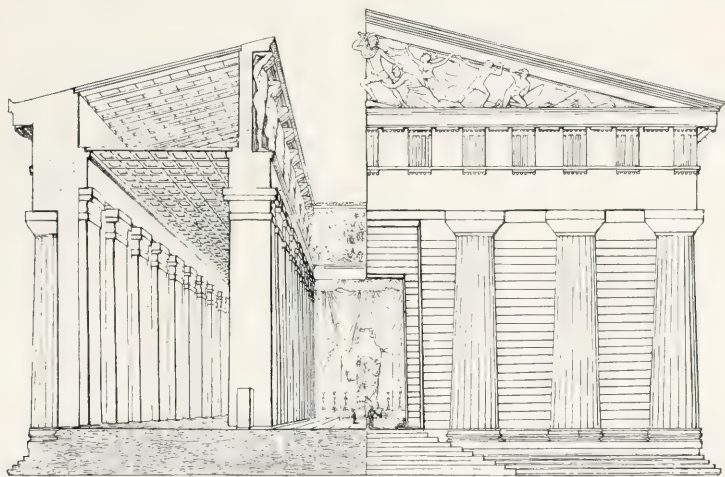
From "Il Viaggiatore in Girgenti," by Raphael Politi, 1827

THE TEMPLE OF THE OLYMPIAN JOVE

To the archæologist, about the most interesting of the temples of Girgenti is the enormous ruin of the temple of the Olympian Jove. It and the Temple of Hercules have the honour of being locked up,

TEMPLE OF THE OLYMPIAN JOVE

and of having *custodi* in charge, while the more perfect temples of Juno and Concordia are left to take care of themselves. The temple of the Olympian Jove has this great advantage over the other temples of Girgenti, that we know that it really belonged to him, while their names are more or less "fancy." According to Baedeker, "This vast structure, which has been extolled by Polybius and de-



SECTION OF THE TEMPLE OF THE OLYMPIAN JOVE. DRAWN BY RAPHAEL POLITI

From "*Il Viaggiatore in Girgenti*," by Raphael Politi, 1826

scribed by Diodorus, was erected in the fifth century B.C. It was a pseudo-peripteros with thirty-seven or thirty-eight huge half-columns, seven at each end (perhaps only six at the west end), and fourteen on each side, each twenty feet in circumference, with flutings broad enough to admit of a man standing in each. The flat backs of the columns formed a series of pilasters. The entrance has not been definitely determined, but traces of steps are believed to have been found at the west end. Within the walls of the cella, although uncertain where, stood the colossal Telamones or Atlantes, one of

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which has been reconstructed, and measures twenty-five feet in height. They are supposed to have been placed either in front of the pilasters, or above them as bearers of the entablature. In the tympanum of the east side (or according to some authorities, on the metopæ) was represented the contest of the gods with the giants, on the west side the conquest of Troy. Entire portions of the side-walls have fallen outwardly, and now lie with the same relative disposition of their parts as when erect. The notches and grooves were either for fitting the stones into each other, or for raising them to their places."

There is now scarcely one stone standing upon another. A considerable portion of it was standing till late in the Middle Ages, and was then overthrown, by an earthquake it is believed. This is the temple which has suffered most from the construction of the mole of Porto Empedocle by the inevitable Carlo Quinto. By a piece of good fortune, one of the Telamons which supported something or other (they call them Telamons when they are men, and Caryatids when they are women) was found in the ruins, and left at Girgenti.



Photo by Lucasepore.

THE TEMPLE OF OLYMPIAN JOVE AND THE FALLEN TELAMON

THE ORIGINAL OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Only a copy went to Palermo, which is the charnel house of Sicilian art, to parody the famous description of the Louvre. The reconstructed Telamon lies on its back, squinting at modern Girgenti, which is a city set on a hill, if ever there was one.

How he would have scowled if he had heard the lady in the white nuns'-veiling say that he reminded her of the cantharides round S. Pancras Church in the Euston Road!

This temple was enormous, as large as a modern cathedral—over 353 feet long, and the best part of 200 feet wide. Apropos of this temple the printer has betrayed the author of Murray's charming, erudite, and excellent handbook to Sicily into a most absurd mistake, for he says the temple was commenced in 480 B.C., and was finished all but the roof when the city was captured by the Carthaginians in 486 B.C.—six years earlier! It should be 406. According to Murray, the temple was built on so vast a scale that instead of having open columns like any other Greek temple the spaces between the columns were built up with masonry in order to support the architrave of the roof, and there was a roof, and the masonry between the columns had windows. This would make the Temple of Jupiter Olympius at Girgenti the type out of which grew all the churches of Christendom. We were able to show Stephana the stately carob tree under which we had lunched in 1896, still in the undiminished splendour of its dark glossy leaves and pale green locust beans. The place where we had lunched with Jove was a little basin in a heap of fallen masonry piled up for transportation all those years ago, but not required. Among them were huge bits of the cornice. They are almost more of a curiosity where they lie, as a monument of Vandalism, than where they lay as the earthquake shook them down. Each block has at each end a deep U-shaped groove for hoisting it into its place.

THE GOLDEN GATE —THE TOMB OF THERON—AND THE SMALLER TEMPLES

Between this temple and that of Hercules is the Golden Gate (Porta Aurea), and a road leading down to the fine Greek or early Roman tomb of Theron, below which, built into a house, are the remains of

IN SICILY

the so-called Temple of Æsculapius. Of this temple the remains are very slight. But of the Temples of Castor and Pollux—now seen to be not one temple, but two, standing back to back—there is a very



THE TOMB OF THERON

Photo by Incorpora.

picturesque fragment—four Doric columns forming an angle, and supporting a fragment of the pediment of the temple. This is perhaps the most beautiful fragment at Girgenti. It is distressing to find that it is a restoration. The fragments have been re-erected with much taste and skill by Signor Cavallari. As there were two temples, perhaps one did belong to Castor and the other to Pollux.

THE TEMPLES WERE
STUCCOED AND COLOURED

It is interesting as showing a good deal of the richly coloured

stucco with which most of the Girgenti temples were encased, like the ruins of Pompeii, and has rather a fine carving of a lion's head. The stucco has all now disappeared, except a few films here and there, but it lasted long enough to shield these priceless relics of antiquity from the siroccos of many centuries. The difference between the southern and northern faces of the ruined temples in the south of Sicily is astounding; the sirocco eats into the stone as the limnoria eats into the wooden piles of sea-piers and wharves.



Photo by C. G. ...

THE TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX AT GERGENTI

THE TEMPLE OF VULCAN

There is no doubt that the temples of Girgenti and many other ancient temples were most brilliantly coloured, and I suppose that the fine modern theatre at Palermo, built in the classical style, which is called the Politeama, gives one the best idea of the glitter and brilliance of an old Greek temple.

THE TEMPLE OF VULCAN AND THE PISCINA

There remains yet one other temple in this part, that of Vulcan, of which the fragments are very slight. One visits it principally for the fine view of the other temples, and to peep over into the vast, artificially-cut hollow, not unlike the latomias of Syracuse, which is said to have been a cistern for this rainless city, but is now used as a garden. In all probability, whatever its ultimate use was, it began as a quarry, like the Syracusan latomias, though it is not comparable to them in grandeur. It is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus

CHAPTER XXVIII.

S. NICOLA AND THE RUPE ATENEA

THE CONVENT OF S. NICOLA

MISS NORMA LORIMER laid the scene of the Sicilian half of her delightful story *Josiah's Wife* mainly in the convent of S. Nicola at Girgenti, where Camela Skidmore is supposed to be boarding when she meets Walter Norreys. I applaud her choice, for I have come across few more delightful spots in all my wanderings; it and the convent of S. Caterina at Taormina are my beau-ideals of convents at just the proper stage of decay; and in beauty of situation even S. Caterina must yield to S. Nicola, for you do not get a view of the Greek theatre, the most famous ruin at Taormina, from S. Caterina, while at S. Nicola you get an incomparable view of the temples of Girgenti—you live with them. And only at Athens and Pæstum can you see a finer group of Greek temples than you have at Girgenti.

How well I remember our second coming to S. Nicola! At a first glimpse we had hardly noticed it. The city of Girgenti stands so high on the hill that you have to descend to the temples by a series of very sharp zigzags, largely between high walls and banks; and when we were passing the convent I noticed the golden ivy with its sorrel-shaped spikes of flowers, buzzing with bees, and the old man prickly-pears, intertwined both of them with glorious masses of the ivy-leaved pink geranium, which overhung the banks of that steep, dusty, rutty, wicked, stony lane more than the sombre wall and church of the old convent. But on our return from our first long

THE CONVENT OF S. NICOLA

day at the temples, we had an hour or two before sunset, as we began the climb outside the convent, and I noticed the fine Sicilian-Gothic doorway of the church.

VINCENZO AND THE LANDLADY IN "JOSIAH'S WIFE"

We had in the interval picked up the wonderful Sicilian boy who figures in Miss Lorimer's novel as Vincenzo—I believe that was really his name—as a sort of guide, and I asked him if gentlemen were permitted to go into the convent church. "Most certainly," he said; "it is only the farm of Signor Panitteri." He jumped down and hammered at the convent gate in an important sort of way, and in a minute or two it was opened by the charming Madonna-faced young peasant woman who is Camela's landlady in the story. She spoke Italian well, and had the prettiest Italian manner. The poor Sicilian women are not distinguished for easy manners; in remote parts they run away from you when you speak to them, a relic of the evil old régime. She said we could go over anything we chose, and we spent a couple of hours in wandering round the convent and basking on the terrace in the evening sun, and eating the armful of mandarin oranges which she picked by the bough for us.

THE 1896 LANDLADY STILL THERE—HER SON

When we went back to S. Nicola in 1898, oddly enough we had one of Camela's countrywomen, with a good deal of Camela's charm and wit, with us.

The Madonna-faced woman did not seem to have grown a day older, although she told us that the beautiful big boy of fourteen, who was to show us round, was her boy. He was a fine boy of five feet six, as straight as a dart, well grown, and with that lovely glow of health which these young Sicilians, who have lived almost night and day, since they were born, in the open air, get. He was almost as handsome, too, as Vincenzo, with the straight, regular, beautifully chiselled features which we are accustomed to call Greek. Only, in the place of the wonderful, liquid, roguish jet-black eyes which smiled, like his white teeth, and were the principal characteristic of Vincenzo's

IN SICILY

face, he had the typical Palermo eyes of a very dark bluish grey, which look quite blue sometimes, and quite black at others—grave, passionate eyes, which convey more than anything else that expression of brooding over ancient and incurable wrongs, which is almost the first thing that a student of the lower-class Sicilian notices.

We were, of course, impatient to display to Miss Heriot the charms of our convent, which we had so often crammed down her throat as superior to her beloved S. Caterina, and she was very much impressed at the outset by the permanence of things in Sicily. She was getting a little stronger in her Italian now, and asked the Madonna, half in joke, if those were the same peacocks we had so often told her about as living with a tribe of white rabbits in the ruined Greco-Norman choir.

"Yes, signorina, they are all of them the same; none of them have died." "And is this the baby?" she asked, stooping and swiftly picking up the queer little dark-eyed creature, with a face like a Murillo's S. John, and its shirt coming out through the back of its too well-worn breeches—a lovely child, and in spite of its rags as clean as a new pin. "Why, of course, it must be," she added, "and isn't it too cute for anything?"

It was. And its mother, in true Sicilian fashion—they do not see very many strangers, let alone English strangers, in the remoter places—recognised us the moment we knocked at the door, and asked us where the other boy was who had accompanied my son when we paid our last visit to the convent.

THE GARDEN AND THE TERRACE OF S. NICOLA

We decided to see the garden first. Stephana could not find words to express her admiration of the long walk bordered by a pergola of snow-white columns supporting a vine arbour, enclosed on each side by little groves of orange trees, whose dark glossy leaves threw into brilliant relief the snowy blossoms and golden fruit which hung on them side by side at this season of the year. These were mingled here and there with the lighter-foliaged lemon trees, which afforded even more brilliant contrasts with their rich green

THE TOMB OF PHALARIS

leaves, yellow fruit, white blossom, and young black shoots. We duly pointed out to her the dates in fruit, and the view as we climbed the stairway, with its tall, picturesque balustrade, to that delightful terrace. I think you get from here, better than from the terrace itself, the picture of the yellow city crowning the hilltop of the citadel of ancient Acragas, seen through a framework of splendid umbrella-headed stone pines, which are by no means as numerous in Sicily as they are in Italy, and therefore the more remarkable in their stately beauty. The terrace itself is just a long, low-parapeted terrace of sufficient height to give it a most commanding view. It is only made of plaster, except at one end, where they stole the marble cornices of a Greek temple to adorn it, as a magpie adorns her nest. But when once you stand upon its tiles in the evening sun and look southwards to the temples and the sea, you feel that there are not many terraces for which you would exchange it.

THE GEBBIA AND THE TOMB OF PHALARIS

"Does that child often fall into that Joseph's pit?" asked Stephana of the Madonna. Without in the least recognising the allusion, the Madonna saw that she referred to the huge *gebbia* (tank), many feet long and about a dozen feet deep, which occupied a good part of the terrace. "He would not have to fall twice, signorina." Stephana agreed with us that the view of the temples was marvellous, though she did not give them quite sufficient consideration, because she had fallen in love at first sight with the old yellow convent—I believe a good deal for its having the wild fig tree springing from its walls. We had not so much time on this occasion, for I had to be indoors before sundown, so we hurried her down from Camela's terrace to the tomb of Phalaris, which is in the convent grounds, and which Witheridge was anxious to see; he thought it such a very fine name. The tomb of Phalaris is a Roman building, with a Norman arch cut under the Roman porch, and with good Norman vaulting, but nothing else inside, except heaps of stones and a few bones, though it has a nice stylobate. It is called locally the Chapel of Phalaris, or the Temple of the Sun.

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THE CHURCH OF S. NICOLA

From the tomb of Phalaris we were conducted through the back of the convent to the roofless choir, with its heavy cornice in the style of a Greek temple, and Norman paintings, round to the present church, which has no communication with it, but which has the same



Photo by Alinari.

THE CHURCH OF S. NICOLA

curious, immensely heavy cornice, and a curious stone barrel-roof strengthened with stone rafters about two feet thick. This church abounds in the architectural freaks which you are so apt to meet in Sicily, especially in remote places. The great door, for instance, in its west end, makes no attempt to be in the centre, and there are Norman arches under the Greek cornice, and Sicilian-Gothic under the Norman. The beautiful Sicilian-Gothic style itself has some features which are freaks architecturally.

THE RUPE ATENEA

Nor are minor monstrosities wanting, as, for instance, the painted modern Madonna on an antique pedestal, a crucifix with a draped Christ, and a giant's hand holding the holy water basin, and much admired. But it was a picturesque and striking old church, in spite of its bad taste, and we were loath to leave the convent with its delightful outside stairways, its crimson stocks growing in every crack, its tall stone pines, its olives and pears, and figs and oranges. The whole place, in its sunset days, looks as if it was not kept for profit, but as a pleasance for lizards and artists, though there was a boy lazily hoeing corn between the almond trees while we stood listening to the music wafted from the Sunday band in the Giardino Garibaldi, as they call the public gardens on the opposite side.

THE RUPE ATENEA

I suppose you grow less energetic as you grow older, though the change from 1896, when you are forty, to 1898, when you are forty-two, ought not to be very marked. At any rate we did not repeat in 1898 the expedition we made to S. Biagio and the Rupe Atenea.

EMPEDOCLES AS A SANITARY ENGINEER

The Rupe Atenea is one of the twin hills included in the ancient citadel; it is about 1,150 feet above the sea, and is said to be called the Rock of Athene, as having once been occupied by a temple to Minerva (Athena), of which nothing remains but the tradition. But most people, who have the time, ascend it, because from it they get the best view of the modern city and the best idea of the ancient. The top has evidently been levelled. There is another tradition that formerly there was no ravine between it and the city, but that the philosopher Empedocles, the Darwin of his day, made it to admit the passage of the Tramontana to dispel the malaria of the plain between Girgenti and the port which bears his name. Empedocles is probably the only person who ever welcomed the bitter north wind which drives the stranger from Florence.

IN SICILY

S. BIAGIO, THE TEMPLE OF CERES

In 1896, after we had spent our second day amongst the temples, we walked up the hill, which was a street of virgin stone dotted with the sword-like leaves of the wild onion. Vincenzo thought that we should see S. Biagio, the little Norman church which was in its unconverted days the Temple of Ceres and Proserpine (Demeter and Persephone). You can trace the stylobate distinctly; they are very tender to the stylobates of converted temples in Girgenti. The stylobate in the crypt of the old cathedral is one of the sights of the city. There were evidently not so many Christians at S. Biagio as there had been heathen in the days of Proserpine. They did not use all the stylobate; there is a bit left over still. There is also an Arab-looking campo-santo, with a tufa wall, close by.

OUR GUIDE VINCENZO

Vincenzo pointed out the crosses on what he called heathen stones. He was such a young heathen himself—a young heathen god. His Apollo-like beauty had struck us as we were looking at the Temple of Concordia. He was in charge of an ass, and was presumably engaged upon his master's business. I photographed him, as I thought, surreptitiously; but he had noticed it, and expressed his pleasure. He went on to offer to be our guide for half a franc for the rest of the day. We did not want a guide, but the ladies thought him good to look at, so we closed, and he simply left his ass to follow us.

At Taormina, Vincenzo would rapidly have been advanced to the post of chief model. He has such young straight limbs, such hyacinthine curls, such liquid black eyes! Before he became our guide he was the most importunate of the urchins. Once installed as Jack-in-office at this magnificent salary he drove off the others who were smaller. I considered the fact that he could speak Italian a higher evidence of his having been educated than the fact of his knowing that S. Biagio was built out of the Temple of Ceres and

OUR GUIDE VINCENZO

Proserpine. The temple cella was certainly used in building its lower part, whatever god the temple may have belonged to. Vincenzo was not really interested in the matter; he was in a mighty hurry for us to be scrambling up over the wild fennel and wild onions and asphodels and the sea of little boulders to the summit of the rock levelled for some other temple, whose name and actual site had been forgotten. The edge was cut as clean as a cut of cheese, but Vincenzo stood with his toes over it bidding us watch. We half expected him to jump over and come down on his feet, like a cat, none the worse; but he only clapped his hands with hollow palms, and out from the precipice over which he stood whirled flocks of rock-pigeons.

THE BACK VIEW OF CASTROGIOVANNI

When all his dear *palombi* were driven out, he drew our attention to the tremendous view of precipices and wild olive-dotted, rocky valleys beyond; and yet further beyond, the immemorial city of Castrogiovanni, on its rifted mountain-top, eloquent with memories from the day of Pluto and Proserpine.



*From a photo
by the Author.*

VINCENZO



Photo by Sommer.

"HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!" GIRGENTI AND THE FALLEN TELAMON

CHAPTER XXIX.

A WALK IN THE CITY OF GIRGENTI

THE ANCIENT ACRAGAS, GIRGENTI

THERE are few places in the world more impressive than Girgenti, standing as it does upon a great hill almost precipitous on one side. The modern town of 22,000 inhabitants, which stands at the top of this hill, with traces of mighty walls, was only the citadel of the ancient Agragas, which became, with diminished splendour, the Roman Agrigentum. Agragas, Pindar's "splendour-loving noble city of all the most beautiful," with its 200,000 inhabitants, filled the plain all round the mighty temples, which are only excelled by those of Athens and Pæstum. But the city, which was the latest built of all the great Greek cities of Sicily, never quite got over its destruction by

CURIO-BUYING AT GIRGENTI

the Carthaginians in 406 B.C., less than 200 years after its foundation, though it recovered to a certain extent and fought for its Carthaginian conquerors in the first Punic War. But again it fell, and the Romans took from it 25,000 prisoners, who had been unable to make their escape in the night, together with a vast amount of booty.

THE SIEGES OF GIRGENTI

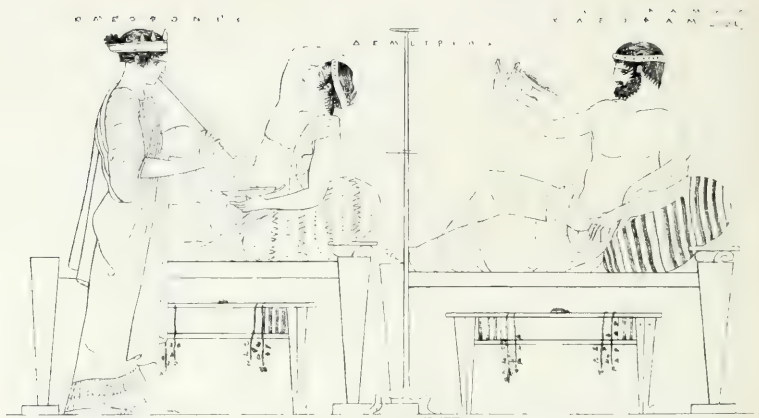
Sieges of Girgenti, from first to last, seem always to have ended in the inhabitants trying to make their escape by night; and no wonder, with such villainous-looking mountain passes to help them. They fled from the Carthaginians by night, and they fled with the Carthaginians from the Romans by night, and they fled from the Saracens by night a thousand years later. The lower part of Girgenti, lying on the plain by the sea, and possessing a fair harbour, was as inviting to the Saracens as it had been to their Carthaginian forerunners in the north of Africa. Girgenti was under the Saracen yoke for nearly three hundred years, and it must be admitted that the Saracens behaved very well on the whole to its monuments. They were not driven out till the year 1086, when Roger the Great Count, father of Roger the King, drove them out, refortified the citadel, and made the city the seat of an important bishopric, which it still is.

THINGS TO BUY AT GIRGENTI

Now that the inhabitants behave pretty decently, the present city of Girgenti is very interesting, though its palaces are not so fine as those even of Syracuse. The cheap, modern, unglazed pottery of the city is of wonderfully elegant, classical shapes, quite distinct from the classical pottery of Syracuse, and Girgenti is a great place for buying coins and ancient pottery.

Fossicking for antiquities is quite a profession in Girgenti, where the plain round the temples, about a couple of miles long by a mile wide, which was the most populous part of the ancient city, has to-day hardly a house standing upon it. The fossickers take the best of their finds to the museums of the island. The rest they sell very cheap,

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FIGURES FROM AN OLD GREEK VASE
IN WHICH THE MUSEUM OF GIRGENTI IS PARTICULARLY RICH
From "Il Viaggiatore in Girgenti" by Raphael Politi, 1826

and Sign. Celi, the courteous and accomplished director of the local museum, is always willing to give a stranger his opinion on the genuineness of the articles offered for sale. These poor men who spend their time in hunting for antiquities have, some of them, a minute knowledge of their subject, and all of them have delightful manners. The poor scholar spending his days alternately in excavating and hawking his wares at humble prices is one of the nicest bits of local colour in the island. You always felt that you were dealing with gentlemen, though you were bargaining in soldi.

OUR FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE SICILIAN STUDENT

When we were at Girgenti before, we had done the city pretty thoroughly, all except the cathedral, which we happened to have left till the last afternoon and found locked. It was there that we had first learned the value of the Sicilian student. Escorted by the populace, we were climbing our way from point to point up that city of crags. If we paused for a minute to look at a porch

THE SICILIAN STUDENT

of Renaissance work but true classical grace, or a quaint staircase mounting up from the back of a shady archway, the mob closed in, and Gallo charged them, stick in hand. But among the most pertinacious were three students, and as they belonged to a superior class he did not venture to beat them. Quite by chance while he was beating the others, I asked them some questions, and discovered thereby that they were yearning to act as our cicerones in hunting out the lions of their city. For the rest of that day's walk they acted both as guide and bodyguards, and the small boys were more afraid of them than they were of Gallo. Rank evidently carries prestige in Girgenti.

LIONISING GIRGENTI WITH THE STUDENTS

They took us a most interesting walk through the city, a city of outside stairs, some of them over arches, which showed one what S. Andrews must have been like before the Playfairs turned it from a mediæval city into a dull country town with ruins on its outskirts. Fortunately at Girgenti the shiny black cloth frock-coat element does not exist. The boys really showed us the most interesting things. The church they selected when I asked for good churches was S. Michele. It was baroque, but it had a good picture and a dear little campanile, and was gloriously situated on the city wall. They were more successful with palaces, for there is or was in 1896 a dear little Spanish palace next to S. Michele, and the Palace of S. Vincenzo, which they showed us, had very fine ironwork on it and a handsome balcony curling round, while the Palazzo Portolano (named apparently in Sicilian fashion from its present proprietor) had a lovely balcony on triangular brackets adorned with coats-of-arms. This was one of the best examples we had seen of Sicilian-Spanish; but taken as a whole Girgenti was poor in palaces. However, they showed us some very quaint, narrow streets, which we should never have seen without them, for we had to dive through such archways to get to them. The *chef d'œuvre* was a *forno*, or bakery, which might have been built and still carried on by the Saracens. It was such a very Moorish *forno*, shaped like a beehive, with a fire in front and the breads

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behind. It was underground, as bakeries are in even more civilised places, and it had a most curious affair which they called "the fiddle," where the bread was pounded with a kind of wedge. In one of the streets there was a café exactly like a doormouse cage, and in all of them there was a plentiful supply of the very small boy of Girgenti, who differs from other European male infants in having an almost separate trouser for each leg, with his shirt hanging down between them fore and aft.

THE SEMINARY ONCE THE CHIARAMONTE PALACE

It was natural that students should attach principal importance to the great seminary at which they were studying. It is a couple of centuries old and stands at the top of a hill, and in its main arrangements reminded me of the Laval University at Quebec and the College of Montreal and other great Catholic educational institutions, although of course it was not very wealthy. Still it was well worth seeing.

It was formerly the Chiaramonte Palace, and has a fine cortile inside, which contains a well with beautiful ironwork, and an ornamental but broken cardinal's escutcheon, which we learned to be the arms of the bishop who restored the Seminario. It was, they said, three hundred years old, while parts of the building were as much as five or six hundred years old. Very peaceful looked the tiled court of learning into which we made our entry, under the ægis of our student friends. It was so peaceful that our faithful Gallo Lugra, the ex-soldier, was excluded.

The students took us into their long, arched refettorio, with its marble tables on iron legs. It was attractive enough, though it did not seem to offer much in the way of refreshments beyond water-glasses, egg-cups, and melons. From the plain monastery garden, which contained a good gum-tree, we had the same grand view that we enjoyed from our hotel; and in the fine library, where the students seem to do much of their work, there was a good balcony. Many of the boys were studying in their bedrooms, which were rather on the English public school plan, with their beds converted

MY SON'S LEAP

by day into tents, their toises for books and papers, and their pegs in lieu of wardrobes. The students pointed out to me with great amusement the little peep-hole for keeping them in espionage. Everything at this place was done decently and in order. The porter would not take the franc I gave him before the students, but asked the soldier whom he would not admit to receive it on his behalf when the students were not looking.

MY SON'S LEAP FOR LIFE

It was a little after we had left this that I experienced one of the greatest shocks I ever had in my life. We had gone down to a sort of plateau under the seminary, which had a seat running along the low parapet which bounded it. My boy, who was then only fourteen, ran at it with one stride to the seat, and one stride on to the top for a broad jump. I saw him give a slight hesitation, and knew that something was wrong, but he had such a momentum on that he could not stop himself, and jumped for it.

Rushing up, I saw the awful predicament he was in. It was an old fortification, and under the wall from which he had jumped there was a drop of twenty feet to a kind of dry moat, bounded on the other side by a machicolated wall. Seeing the drop, he jumped for the wall, which was about six or seven feet away, and managed to hang on to its rough masonry by the skin of his hands.

I did not see at first how he was to get out of it until a ladder was fetched, and I knew by the fact of the wall, on which he hung, being machicolated that it was likely to be of great height.

My ease of mind was not at all increased when I saw him climb over the machicolations. But he retained the same splendid presence of mind which had made him jump for it, and peeping over the wall saw that about two feet below the top there was the narrow coping intended, I suppose, for throwing off scaling-ladders. And along this narrow coping he walked, balancing himself by holding on to the top, ignoring the tremendous drop below him until he reached the point where there was a cross wall to the plateau upon which we stood. Our hearts were in our mouths all the time. But

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till he had swarmed across this wall and stood beside us he never lost his colour. And then what turned him white was the sight of his hands. I said he held on by the skin of his hands, and he left a good deal of it behind him on the sharp, rough masonry. Gallo at once suggested that what he wanted was a cup of wine, and we went to a little *locanda*, which was in a sort of grotto tunnelled into the face of the rock. The cup of wine cost a penny.

THE GATEWAY OF S. GIORGIO AT GIRGENTI

We then went to examine the exquisite little gateway of S. Giorgio to relieve the tension of his and our minds. It is only a half-blocked-up gateway, with a glimpse of a ruined interior, a few weeds, and a Sicilian sky behind—but such a gateway! When it was complete it may have been merely a rich and beautiful twelfth-century gateway; seen at this—just the poetical state of decay—it is the type of all Sicily, and one of the most beautiful objects in art. It is recessed with wonderful symmetry, but of no great size. The mouldings of its recesses, though by no means elaborate, are simply perfection, as will be seen from the illustration, and the silvery white of its stone can only be proclaimed, not conveyed. To me, of course, it has the yet further significance of having witnessed that miraculous escape.

THE LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER

I cannot remember what else those willing and intelligent students showed us, for the memory of our first visit to the city is rather effaced by a second and third, though I have a vivid recollection of a visit to the local photographer with one of them one morning. It was not very early—after ten, I think. The photographer, like most local photographers in Sicily, was very poor, and the only way he could get the proper light was by living at the top of an ever-so-high house, where he sold his photographs and kept his family in his bedroom. There was also a kitchen, and I suppose a dark room. And this little lot were guarded from the assaults of an unkind world by a great iron gate across the staircase, which for size and the beauty of its ironwork, would in England do duty for half the front entrance of a nobleman's



Photo by Alinari.

THE GATEWAY OF S. GIORGIO

A WALK ROUND THE CITY OF GIRGENTI

park. He had, of course, hardly any photographs to sell, not a quarter of the choice kept by the *padrone* of our own hotel, so I bought all he had, and the steps did not seem so eternal going down. We had to do Girgenti conscientiously. We had told Mr. and Mrs. Heriot so much about it in Stephana's conspiracy that we felt that Stephana ought to leave no stone untrodden. We took the conductor of the hotel as our guide, and he was quite as good a guide as any other in Girgenti, except for the temples, which have *custodi* of their own.

OUR WALK ROUND THE CITY

I am sure that Stephana's heart sank within her at the start, for it was quite as warm as is pleasant, and the lanes by which he took us were almost as steep as ladders, nor did there seem any immediate prospect of reaching the summit of the city. I did not find the way long. Inspired by their temples, the architects of Girgenti built such splendid porches. They even succeeded in making them two-storied without vulgarity, the cornices being very fine. After a quick climb, in which our admiration was divided between the gigantic radishes, as large as small turnips, and the gigantic *carabinieri*, and our wonder was excited at seeing parts of animals, which are never sold in England, hung up on clothes-lines outside the butchers' shops, and women knitting with bending wire needles, but otherwise in English style, we arrived at what was once the temple of Jupiter Polias, and once upon a time the cathedral of Girgenti, and is now only a poor people's church, still called, in honour of its heathen origin, S. Maria dei Greci.

S. MARIA DEI GRECI—AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

This little church has many beautiful or interesting features; the ironwork of its gate is lovely, and the gate is most useful, for when the female sacristan had admitted us she locked the gate behind us and threw stones at the boys who had been following us, who evidently had a wholesome respect for her temper. The church has Gothic arches, and a dilapidated but picturesque little coffered wooden roof with carved corbels, and the side door is of most elegant

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but ruinous fifteenth-century Gothic. The sacristaness did not wish us to look at these things, at all events not first. S. Maria dei Greci contained one of the sights of the town, and it was our duty to see that without any further delay, so she went to a charming little antique reliquary on an altar where she kept a few dips, and, lighting up, led us down to the crypt, a sort of cellar built over the stylobate of Jupiter Polias, the guardian of the city, before the Virgin Mary took his position and his temple and the bases of half a dozen of his columns, all of them very well preserved. This is the principal classical ruin we saw within the bounds of the present city, though there are, I understand, extensive catacombs. Catacombs are nothing in a country like Sicily, which has a substratum of cave from end to end of the island—a regular basement. Where the caves have been cut into on a large scale, as at Syracuse, latomias ensue; where they have not, you have to do with catacombs. The supply of bones is practically unlimited, though you might want a pedigree for anything earlier than Saracen or Lower Empire. When we got back to the church itself she showed us a tomb sealed up with lead in the floor, but as her Italian was limited I could not understand what she said about it. She seemed to attach importance to it, as well as to the small traces of the temple which are visible in the church itself. But the pride of her heart was evidently a painted crucifix, in which the Body was represented in an advanced state of decay; and just at the very moment she was dilating upon this the boys she had stoned away from the gate, hearing her voice, made a demonstration outside the front door of the church. She took off her shoes, which had of course wooden soles and heels, and, arming herself with one of them, crept up quietly to the door, opened it suddenly, hammered the boys with her shoe as long as she could reach them, and threw it after them. We paid her quickly and went on to the present cathedral.

On the way, which was at first still of the same perpendicular nature, we passed the famous Biblioteca Lucchesiana, founded about a hundred and fifty years ago and said to contain treasures, which shares with the *carabinieri* a very fine palace with handsome balconies and other Spanish features.

THE CATHEDRAL

The most beautiful balcony brackets in the city are those of the palace opposite, called, as far as I remember, the Palazzo Gramito. The balconies are dilapidated but charmingly elegant. The bishop's palace, just beyond the library, is large but plain.

THE CATHEDRAL OF GIRGENTI

Then comes the cathedral. The cathedral of Girgenti is one of the most interesting in Sicily, not, of course, to be compared architecturally with the cathedral of Palermo or of Messina. The cathedral at Catania does not count, it has been so modernised; and the cathedral at Syracuse is interesting, not as a cathedral, but as an almost entire Greek temple.

The cathedral at Girgenti is full of interesting features, some of them wonderfully picturesque; indeed, taken as a whole, it is an artist's treasure-trove of picturesqueness.

The moment we entered it we were dumbfounded by the richness of the glorious roof of 1688, the finest I ever saw in Sicily, carved and coloured like a temple at Shiba or Nikko, and coffered and open-raftered like a fourteenth-century Dutch stadthaus roof, the corbels terminating in spikes. It had quaint old carved and gilt Renaissance confessionals, and a huge gilt latticed cage rising from the floor of the nave, like an overgrown pulpit, to a considerable height, and entered only by a secret passage. This was for the use of the nuns. The pictures had curtains of blue Bombay cotton, except those of the King and Queen, which hung in inappropriate prominence over the interior of the west door. Some special service was going on when we went in, and here, for the first time at Girgenti, we saw women of the better class, all of them in the national black *manto*. There was even one dreamy-faced little girl in a *manto*. Underneath the roof was a billowy cornice in the Greek temple style, so popular at Girgenti. The choir was in the centre of the church, and its ironwork would be perfectly charming if it had not been coarsely painted with green and gold. Its passion-flower bosses were little masterpieces of seventeenth-century ironwork.

IN SICILY

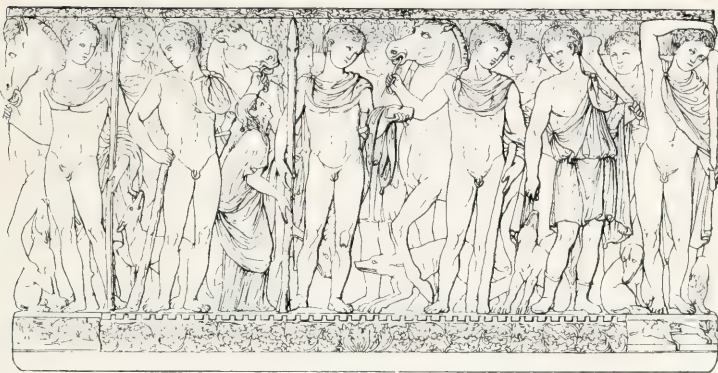
HOW BAROQUE A SICILIAN CHURCH CAN BE

Among the interesting features of the cathedral was the chancel, one of the most flagrant but typical pieces of baroque to be found in Sicily or anywhere else. There were naked mermaids or cupids flying or swimming in the frames of the sacred pictures, and the fountains had polished-iron water running out of them. The baroque work was mostly gilt and white—a bewildering tangle of shells and feathers and figures and scrolls, a monument of bad taste, though there was a certain prettiness about the faces, which were being cleaned with palm brooms tied to the ends of long bamboos. There really was a certain charm about this tissue of absurdities, and it was characteristic with a vengeance. While we were surveying it a nice little acolyte offered to fetch a bigger acolyte to show us the sacristy and the treasures. The fact that an important service was going on did not seem to signify in the least. We resigned ourselves, because we knew that the famous sarcophagus of the loves of Phædra and Hippolytus, which used to form the high altar of the cathedral until its incongruity was noted, was in that sacristy. Otherwise our experience had not taught us to expect much of Sicilian sacristans; but we were richly rewarded.

IN THE SACRISTY OF THE CATHEDRAL

The sarcophagus, found in the Temple of Concordia, proved to be one of the most splendid which has come down from antiquity. The figures were full of grace, and life, and feeling. Very beautiful, too, were the splendid pewter urns in which the sacred oil was kept, and the slender spouted vessels for decanting it—magnificent old things, a couple of hundred years old. There was also a superb red-and-black Greek vase, covered with figures and in perfect condition, a foot or more high. Two dear little white marble well-heads had the giants, the city arms, on them. Gigantes is, of course, a play on the word Girgenti. Etymologically there is no connection whatever, Girgenti being a corruption of the Roman Agrigentum, which, in its turn, was a corruption of the Greek Acragas. In

THE CATHEDRAL



THE SARCOPHAGUS OF PHEDRA AND HIPPOLYTUS
FOUND IN THE TEMPLE OF CONCORDIA AND FORMERLY THE HIGH ALTAR OF THE CATHEDRAL
From "Il Viaggiatore in Girgenti," by Raphael Politi, 1826

another corner was a curious elephant, about the size of a small pig—a fine and characteristic bit of work, said to be of Saracenic origin. Close by was a very late Gothic tomb, dated 1497, with a good figure on it.

When we got back to the church I noticed at least a dozen confession-boxes, with the dark-eyed dames of Girgenti telling the priests their small sins, and looking very comfortable over it. The whole cathedral was perfumed with incense. They seem to get a delightful old-fashioned incense in these country cities.

From the sacristy we had a glimpse of a dear little fig garden and a sweeping view of the wild mountains through which the inhabitants used to melt away in the night during ancient sieges. These Girgentines were never famous for a resolute defence of their homes. I will not say hearths, for there is not a chimney in Girgenti.

THE OTHER LIONS OF THE CATHEDRAL

There is a good deal more to see in the cathedral, for instance, one of Guido's best Madonnas and a sleeping child, and the fine blue-

IN SICILY

and-gold coffering over the choir, with the arms of Carlo Quinto, the Cromwell of Sicilian ruins. Presently our guide put on a very mysterious look, and, producing a key, opened a secret iron door behind a column to show us the grand discovery of a few years ago—a fresco which he ascribed to the year 1093, but which was much more likely to have been executed in the thirteenth century. It is in a lunette, which contains a yet more ancient column.

I do not suppose that the cathedral of Girgenti is any more dedicated to S. Gerlando than the cathedral at Palermo is to S. Rosalia, but all the same you surrender yourself to S. Rosalia when you enter the metropolitan cathedral, and when you enter the Girgentine cathedral you think of S. Gerlando. However, as this noticeable ecclesiastic was a Norman who flourished in 1093, I think he is out of the running for the dedication of a cathedral. For all that he has a very fine shrine with splendid Renaissance brass gates, outside which hang queer little votive pictures, painted on card, of men at the galleys and women on sick-beds, with the usual paraphernalia in wax of diseased limbs. The saint has a very costly and beautiful reliquary of solid silver, made at Palermo two hundred years ago. The priest who displayed it to us was very proud and very funny; he took off the silver head of the saint and gave it to the guide to hold, as you would give a man your hat to hold while you tried a jump.

The see of Girgenti has been held by many notable ecclesiastics; there is quite an array of cardinals' hats hanging over Renaissance tombs.

Suddenly we found that we had very little time left to see the exterior if we meant to catch our train, so, giving our nice little acolyte guide a double fee, we left that delightful old-world medley of ladies in the elegant national *manto*, confessing; of swarms of priests and acolytes, striking many brilliant notes of colour under the roof which was so Japanese in its intensity of hues; of waving silver censers rolling forth rich volumes of incense; and a mellow old organ sending forth volumes of music which do not come into any books of church music that you can buy. As our acolyte held up the leather curtain

THE CATHEDRAL

for us to pass out, Stephana slipped a five-franc note into his hand. "Dear, wee thing," she said, gazing back at him; "I could have eaten him, he looks so nice."

THE EXTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL

The exterior is at war with itself, one half being plain Renaissance, yet pleasing from its sweeping approach, and the other half a gem of fourteenth-century Gothic.

The unfinished tower, maimed alike by ruin and by having never been completed, is one of the most delightful bits of architecture in Sicily. One bit of it especially, a Sicilian-Gothic window, rising above a massive Spanish balcony, is like the gateway of S. Giorgio, a *chef d'œuvre* of ruin, and underneath are two arcades, containing each of them four arches. The upper have in their niches coats-of-arms; the lower, four of the most beautiful arches to be found in Sicily or anywhere, are filled with curious and fantastic bas-reliefs, which have the

effect of old lace. After devoting a few minutes to this arcade and the charming courtyard adjoining, we had to hurry up to the station, passing, at the saddle between the city and the Rupe Atenea, most of the public buildings of Girgenti and the Giardino Pubblico, which is, as usual in Sicily, called the Villa Garibaldi, and has the usual



THE TOWER OF THE CATHEDRAL OF GIRGENTI

IN SICILY

picturesque accessories accentuated in this instance by a glorious view. Of course when we reached the railway station we had a long, long wait, during which we examined the shoot of the railway line down to Porto Empedocle, which is surely the steepest anywhere traversed by a train without the use of cog-wheels. Outside the station, which was stripped of some of its terrors, partly by the fact of its being daylight, partly by the fact that the banditti, who act as outside *facchini*, do not take so much interest in a departing as they do in an arriving train—they would not even have frightened Mrs. Heriot—outside the station, which cut a Greek necropolis, were quantities of the blue-and-white convolvulus, the familiar pink orchid, the gigantic crimson sainfoin, the bright blue grape-hyacinth, the tall asphodel, and the wild yellow lily, which looks like the flowering rush of Japan. We left Girgenti with memories wreathed in flowers.

GIRGENTI GUIDE

HOTELS

There are only two hotels at Girgenti at all frequented by foreigners—the Hotel des Temples and the Hotel Belvedere. The former is the most luxurious of the two, and well-to-do travellers generally go there. But the cooking at the Belvedere is so admirable, and the bedrooms have such a glorious aspect, that it is much to be commended; I also very much prefer the situation. The Hotel des Temples by no means adjoins the temples; it stands at the bottom of the hill on which the city is perched, and the Hotel Belvedere stands at the top. From the point of view of health I would infinitely rather be at the latter. That is an ugly legend of Empedocles, the leading scientific man of his age, having been called in on account of the malariousness of the Girgenti plain, and having cleft the hollow between the city and the Rupe Atenea to blow it away by making a funnel for the tramontana. The Sicilians themselves do not like living in cultivated plains; they consider cities, especially cities on hilltops, much less malarious; and in Sardinia, I believe, no foreigner

GUIDE-BOOK INFORMATION

ventures to sleep except in large towns, for fear of fevers. At any rate, healthier or not, the Belvedere, looking due south over temple and plain and sea, from its great height, has an enchanting view, and you do not have the tremendous climb every time you want to go to the post office. In Italy everyone does always want to go to the post office.

The price of the Belvedere is eight or nine francs a day, including wine, according to the length of stay. The Hotel des Temples is very much more expensive, except for a long stay. The better-off foreigners go there almost as a matter of course, but only dissatisfied people would be dissatisfied with the Belvedere.

RAILWAY FARES, WATER, CURIOS, AND GUIDES

As to the 'bus fares to and from the station, the Belvedere charges a franc a person, and the Hotel des Temples, I think, one and a half. The fares to Girgenti are : from Palermo, first class, 16.45 ; second class, 11.50. From Syracuse, first class, 31.45 ; second class, 22.15. From Taormina, first class, 27.05 ; second class, 19.05. Catania, first-class, 21.60 ; second class, 15.25. Messina, first class, 32.35 ; second class, 22.80. There is, of course, no English doctor or chaplain at Girgenti. The water is said to be good, but personally I think it is wiser to use syphons. The doctors say that no germ can live more than twenty-four hours in a syphon. Girgenti has for the curio-collector a very pleasing pale yellow porous pottery made in classical or pseudo-classical shapes. Visitors are warned against spurious antique pottery, coins, beads, and so on. I have elsewhere stated my reasons for expecting the bulk of them to be genuine, and at any rate you pay no more for them than the value of good imitations. The only guides, except the *custodi* of the various monuments, are the hotel conductors, and the entire population, who have no book knowledge of the various objects which they show you, but can take you to all the principal monuments and repeat a few parrot sentences about each.

IN SICILY

THE SIGHTS OF GIRGENTI

With the exception of the museum, the seminary, and a few churches, which are in the modern city, the ancient citadel of Girgenti, the monuments lie for the most part on the plain at the foot of the Citadel Hill, the bulk of the ancient Agrigentum and Acragas having been built round the temples. One of the temples, that of Jupiter Polias, now the church of S. Maria dei Greci (p. 401), is in the modern city; another, S. Biagio (p. 395), formerly the Temple of Ceres and Proserpine, is on the lower slopes of the Rupe Atenea. Of the remainder, including the four most extensive temples, Juno (p. 371), Concordia (p. 372), Hercules (p. 380), and Jupiter Olympius (p. 382), lie close together on the rocky plateau in the centre of the plain, the other three being the so-called temples of Castor and Pollux (p. 386), and the fragment attributed to Vulcan (p. 389), lying to the west and north of the second pair, while the fragments of the Temple of Æsculapius (p. 386) are a good deal to the south, beyond the fine tomb of Theron (p. 385). The Porta Aurea (p. 385) stood between the temples of Hercules and Jupiter, and the Piscina (p. 389) can be seen from the Temples of Vulcan and Castor and Pollux. On the way up from the plain of the temples to the city are the convent of S. Nicola (pp. 390, 394) and the tomb of Phalaris (p. 393). The Grotta di Fragapane (p. 379) is not far from the Temple of Concordia. Those who have plenty of time can also visit with advantage the mouth of the river, which was the ancient port of Girgenti, and the modern Porto Empedocle. Murray also mentions the city of Favara, five or six miles off on another mountain, as possessing interesting Norman remains.

The top of the Rupe Atenea (p. 367) should be visited for its splendid view. In the city itself the principal objects of interest are the cathedral (p. 409), S. Maria dei Greci (p. 407), S. Michele (p. 401), the gateway of S. Giorgio (p. 404), the Seminario (p. 402), the museum with its magnificent painted Greek jars (p. 400), the Biblioteca Lucchesiana (p. 408), and the catacombs, which are entered from the court of the Chiesa del Purgatorio. The Passeggiata, or esplanade

ARRIVAL AT PALERMO

drive, round the Rupe Atenea, and the public gardens, command delightful views, but few visitors stay long enough at Girgenti to enjoy them. There are considerable and highly picturesque remains of the city walls below the Hotel Belvedere and in other places.

The mean annual temperature of Girgenti is, according to the *Lancet* report, 64.2 Fahr., and the mean temperature of the coldest month, January, 48.2 Fahr. The town of Girgenti is from 800 to 1,300 feet above the sea-level; there is a considerable amount of wind, and the air is on the whole fresh and pure, except when the sirocco blows. The rainfall is small, and the rainlessness in the summer season even more marked at Girgenti than at Palermo. At Girgenti, too, September is rainless; while at Palermo there is sometimes a good deal of rain in September.

We left Girgenti at 8.35 a.m., changed at Rocca Palumba, and arrived at Palermo at 6.22 p.m., freed from the nightmare of the last few days, the prospective loss of Stephana. Finding that her parents were quite philosophical about her absence, and thoroughly comfortable at Taormina, we had insisted on her accompanying us to Palermo, with Witheridge of course. When once we were past Termini her enthusiasm knew no bounds. And the scenery was indeed fascinating. The rich lemon groves of the Conca d'Oro swept down to the rocky shore, varied with almonds and nespoli and other fruit trees in the vicinity of houses. Picturesque castles like that of Trabia rose at intervals, and soon we had the mountain coronet which encircles Palermo on our left hand and its matchless bay on our right.

END OF VOLUME I.

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